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DISSERTATIONS

AND

DISCUSSIONS:

Political, Philosophical, and Historical.

BY

JOHN STUART MILL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# DISSERTATIONS,

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COLERIDGE.\*

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THE name of Coleridge is one of the few English names of our time which are likely to be oftener pronounced, and to become symbolical of more important things, in proportion as the inward workings of the age manifest themselves more and more in outward facts. Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply in the opinions and mental tendencies of those among us who attempt to enlighten their practice by philosophical meditation. If it be true, as Lord Bacon affirms, that a knowledge of the speculative opinions of the men between twenty and thirty years of age is the great source of political prophecy, the existence of Coleridge will show itself by no slight or ambiguous traces in the coming history of our country; for no one has contributed more to shape the opinions of those among its younger men, who can be said to have opinions at all.

\* London and Westminster Review, March, 1840.

The influence of Coleridge, like that of Bentham, extends far beyond those who share in the peculiarities of his religious or philosophical creed. He has been the great awakener in this country of the spirit of philosophy, within the bounds of traditional opinions. He has been, almost as truly as Bentham, "the great questioner of things established;" for a questioner needs not necessarily be an enemy. By Bentham, beyond all others, men have been led to ask themselves, in regard to any ancient or received opinion, Is it true? and by Coleridge, What is the meaning of it? The one took his stand *outside* the received opinion, and surveyed it as an entire stranger to it: the other looked at it from within, and endeavored to see it with the eyes of a believer in it; to discover by what apparent facts it was at first suggested, and by what appearances it has ever since been rendered continually credible, — has seemed, to a succession of persons, to be a faithful interpretation of their experience. Bentham judged a proposition true or false as it accorded or not with the result of his own inquiries; and did not search very curiously into what might be meant by the proposition, when it obviously did not mean what he thought true. With Coleridge, on the contrary, the very fact that any doctrine had been believed by thoughtful men, and received by whole nations or generations of mankind, was part of the problem to be solved; was one of the phenomena to be accounted for. And, as Bentham's short and easy method of referring all to the selfish interests of aristocracies or priests or lawyers, or some other species of impostors, could not satisfy a man who saw so much farther into the complexities of the



human intellect and feelings, he considered the long or extensive prevalence of any opinion as a presumption that it was not altogether a fallacy; that, to its first authors at least, it was the result of a struggle to express in words something which had a reality to them, though perhaps not to many of those who have since received the doctrine by mere tradition. The long duration of a belief, he thought, is at least proof of an adaptation in it to some portion or other of the human mind: and if, on digging down to the root, we do not find, as is generally the case, some truth, we shall find some natural want or requirement of human nature which the doctrine in question is fitted to satisfy; among which wants the instincts of selfishness and of credulity have a place, but by no means an exclusive one. From this difference in the points of view of the two philosophers, and from the too rigid adherence of each to his own, it was to be expected that Bentham should continually miss the truth which is in the traditional opinions, and Coleridge that which is out of them and at variance with them. But it was also likely that each would find, or show the way to finding, much of what the other missed.

It is hardly possible to speak of Coleridge, and his position among his cotemporaries, without reverting to Bentham: they are connected by two of the closest bonds of association, — resemblance and contrast. It would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another. Compare their modes of treatment of any subject, and you might fancy them inhabitants of different worlds. They seem to have scarcely a principle or a premise in

common. Each of them sees scarcely any thing but what the other does not see. Bentham would have regarded Coleridge with a peculiar measure of the good-humored contempt with which he was accustomed to regard all modes of philosophizing different from his own. Coleridge would probably have made Bentham one of the exceptions to the enlarged and liberal appreciation which (to the credit of *his* mode of philosophizing) he extended to most thinkers of any eminence from whom he differed. But contraries, as logicians say, are but *quæ in eodem genere maxime distant*, — the things which are farthest from one another in the same kind. These two agreed in being the men, who, in their age and country, did most to enforce, by precept and example, the necessity of a philosophy. They agreed in making it their occupation to recall opinions to first principles; taking no proposition for granted without examining into the grounds of it, and ascertaining that it possessed the kind and degree of evidence suitable to its nature. They agreed in recognizing that sound theory is the only foundation for sound practice; and that whoever despises theory, let him give himself what airs of wisdom he may, is self-convicted of being a quack. If a book were to be compiled containing all the best things ever said on the rule-of-thumb school of political craftsmanship, and on the insufficiency for practical purposes of what the mere practical man calls experience, it is difficult to say whether the collection would be more indebted to the writings of Bentham or of Coleridge. They agreed, too, in perceiving that the groundwork of all other philosophy must be laid in the philosophy of the mind.

To lay this foundation deeply and strongly, and to raise a superstructure in accordance with it, were the objects to which their lives were devoted. They employed, indeed, for the most part, different materials; but as the materials of both were real observations, the genuine product of experience, the results will, in the end, be found, not hostile, but supplementary, to one another. Of their methods of philosophizing, the same thing may be said: they were different, yet both were legitimate logical processes. In every respect, the two men are each other's "completing counterpart:" the strong points of each correspond to the weak points of the other. Whoever could master the premises and combine the methods of both would possess the entire English philosophy of his age. Coleridge used to say that every one is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian: it may be similarly affirmed, that every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgian; holds views of human affairs which can only be proved true on the principles either of Bentham or of Coleridge. In one respect, indeed, the parallel fails. Bentham so improved and added to the system of philosophy he adopted, that, for his successors, he may almost be accounted its founder; while Coleridge, though he has left, on the system he inculcated, such traces of himself as cannot fail to be left by any mind of original powers, was anticipated in all the essentials of his doctrine by the great Germans of the latter half of the last century, and was accompanied in it by the remarkable series of their French expositors and followers. Hence, although Coleridge is to Englishmen the type and the main source of that

doctrine, he is the creator rather of the shape in which it has appeared among us than of the doctrine itself.

The time is yet far distant, when, in the estimation of Coleridge, and of his influence upon the intellect of our time, any thing like unanimity can be looked for. As a poet, Coleridge has taken his place. The healthier taste, and more intelligent canons of poetic criticism, which he was himself mainly instrumental in diffusing, have at length assigned to him his proper rank, as one among the great (and, if we look to the powers shown rather than to the amount of actual achievement, among the greatest) names in our literature. But, as a philosopher, the class of thinkers has scarcely yet arisen by whom he is to be judged. The limited philosophical public of this country is as yet too exclusively divided between those to whom Coleridge and the views which he promulgated or defended are every thing, and those to whom they are nothing. A true thinker can only be justly estimated when his thoughts have worked their way into minds formed in a different school; have been wrought and moulded into consistency with all other true and relevant thoughts; when the noisy conflict of half-truths, angrily denying one another, has subsided, and ideas which seemed mutually incompatible have been found only to require mutual limitations. This time has not yet come for Coleridge. The spirit of philosophy in England, like that of religion, is still rootedly sectarian. Conservative thinkers and Liberals, transcendentalists and admirers of Hobbes and Locke, regard each other as out of the pale of philosophical intercourse; look upon each other's speculations as vitiated by an original taint,

which makes all study of them, except for purposes of attack, useless, if not mischievous. An error much the same as if Kepler had refused to profit by Ptolemy's or Tycho's observations, because those astronomers believed that the sun moved round the earth; or as if Priestley and Lavoisier, because they differed on the doctrine of phlogiston, had rejected each other's chemical experiments. It is even a still greater error than either of these. For among the truths long recognized by Continental philosophers, but which very few Englishmen have yet arrived at, one is, the importance, in the present imperfect state of mental and social science, of antagonist modes of thought; which, it will one day be felt, are as necessary to one another in speculation, as mutually checking powers are in a political constitution. A clear insight, indeed, into this necessity, is the only rational or enduring basis of philosophical tolerance; the only condition under which liberality in matters of opinion can be any thing better than a polite synonyme for indifference between one opinion and another.

All students of man and society who possess that first requisite for so difficult a study, a due sense of its difficulties, are aware that the besetting danger is not so much of embracing falsehood for truth, as of mistaking part of the truth for the whole. It might be plausibly maintained, that in almost every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied; and that, if either could have been made to take the other's views in addition to its own, little more would have been needed to

make its doctrine correct. Take, for instance, the question, how far mankind have gained by civilization. One observer is forcibly struck by the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the co-operation of multitudes: and he becomes that very common character, the worshipper of "our enlightened age." Another fixes his attention, not upon the value of these advantages, but upon the high price which is paid for them; the relaxation of individual energy and courage; the loss of proud and self-relying independence; the slavery of so large a portion of mankind to artificial wants; their effeminate shrinking from even the shadow of pain; the dull, unexciting monotony of their lives, and the passionless insipidity, and absence of any marked individuality, in their characters; the contrast between the narrow mechanical understanding, produced by a life spent in executing by fixed rules a fixed task, and the varied powers of the man of the woods, whose subsistence and safety depend at each instant upon his capacity of extemporarily adapting means to ends; the demoralizing effect of great inequalities in wealth and social rank; and the sufferings of the great mass of the people of civilized countries, whose wants are scarcely better provided for than those of the savage, while they are bound by a thousand fetters in lieu of the freedom and excitement which are his compensations. One who attends to

these things, and to these exclusively, will be apt to infer that savage life is preferable to civilized; that the work of civilization should as far as possible be undone; and, from the premises of Rousseau, he will not improbably be led to the practical conclusions of Rousseau's disciple, Robespierre. No two thinkers can be more entirely at variance than the two we have supposed, — the worshippers of civilization and of independence, of the present and of the remote past. Yet all that is positive in the opinions of either of them is true: and we see how easy it would be to choose one's path, if either half of the truth were the whole of it; and how great may be the difficulty of framing, as it is necessary to do, a set of practical maxims which combine both.

So, again, one person sees in a very strong light the need which the great mass of mankind have of being ruled over by a degree of intelligence and virtue superior to their own. He is deeply impressed with the mischief done to the uneducated and uncultivated by weaning them of all habits of reverence, appealing to them as a competent tribunal to decide the most intricate questions, and making them think themselves capable, not only of being a light to themselves, but of giving the law to their superiors in culture. He sees, further, that cultivation, to be carried beyond a certain point, requires leisure; that leisure is the natural attribute of a hereditary aristocracy; that such a body has all the means of acquiring intellectual and moral superiority: and he needs be at no loss to endow them with abundant motives to it. An aristocracy indeed, being human, are, as he cannot but see, not exempt, any more

than their inferiors, from the common need of being controlled and enlightened by a still greater wisdom and goodness than their own. For this, however, his reliance is upon reverence for a Higher above them, sedulously inculcated and fostered by the course of their education. We thus see brought together all the elements of a conscientious zealot for an aristocratic government, supporting and supported by an established Christian church. There is truth, and important truth, in this thinker's premises. But there is a thinker of a very different description, in whose premises there is an equal portion of truth. This is he who says, that an average man, even an average member of an aristocracy, if he can postpone the interests of other people to his own calculations or instincts of self-interest, will do so; that all governments in all ages have done so, as far as they were permitted, and generally to a ruinous extent; and that the only possible remedy is a pure democracy, in which the people are their own governors, and can have no selfish interest in oppressing themselves.

Thus it is in regard to every important partial truth: there are always two conflicting modes of thought, — one tending to give to that truth too large, the other to give it too small, a place; and the history of opinion is generally an oscillation between these extremes. From the imperfection of the human faculties, it seldom happens, that, even in the minds of eminent thinkers, each partial view of their subject passes for its worth, and none for more than its worth. But, even if this just balance exist in the mind of the wiser teacher, it will not exist in his disciples, far less in the general mind. He cannot prevent that which is new in his doctrine,



and on which, being new, he is forced to insist the most strongly, from making a disproportionate impression. The impetus necessary to overcome the obstacles which resist all novelties of opinion seldom fails to carry the public mind almost as far on the contrary side of the perpendicular. Thus every excess in either direction determines a corresponding re-action; improvement consisting only in this, — that the oscillation, each time, departs rather less widely from the centre, and an ever-increasing tendency is manifested to settle finally in it.

Now, the Germano-Coleridgian doctrine is, in our view of the matter, the result of such a re-action. It expresses the revolt of the human mind against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is ontological, because that was experimental; conservative, because that was innovative; religious, because so much of that was infidel; concrete and historical, because that was abstract and metaphysical; poetical, because that was matter-of-fact and prosaic. In every respect, it flies off in the contrary direction to its predecessor: yet, faithful to the general law of improvement last noticed, it is less extreme in its opposition, it denies less of what is true in the doctrine it wars against, than had been the case in any previous philosophic re-action; and, in particular, far less than when the philosophy of the eighteenth century triumphed, and so memorably abused its victory, over that which preceded it.

We may begin our consideration of the two systems either at one extreme or the other, — with their highest philosophical generalizations, or with their practical

conclusions. The former seems preferable, because it is in their highest generalities that the difference between the two systems is most familiarly known.

Every consistent scheme of philosophy requires, as its starting-point, a theory respecting the sources of human knowledge, and the objects which the human faculties are capable of taking cognizance of. The prevailing theory in the eighteenth century, on this most comprehensive of questions, was that proclaimed by Locke, and commonly attributed to Aristotle, — that all knowledge consists of generalizations from experience. Of nature, or any thing whatever external to ourselves, we know, according to this theory, nothing, except the facts which present themselves to our senses, and such other facts as may, by analogy, be inferred from these. There is no knowledge *à priori*; no truths cognizable by the mind's inward light, and grounded on intuitive evidence. Sensation, and the mind's consciousness of its own acts, are not only the exclusive sources, but the sole materials, of our knowledge. From this doctrine, Coleridge, with the German philosophers since Kant (not to go farther back), and most of the English since Reid, strongly dissents. He claims for the human mind a capacity, within certain limits, of perceiving the nature and properties of "things in themselves." He distinguishes in the human intellect two faculties, which, in the technical language common to him with the Germans, he calls Understanding and Reason. The former faculty judges of phenomena, or the appearances of things, and forms generalizations from these: to the latter it belongs, by direct intuition, to perceive things, and recognize truths, not cognizable by our

senses. These perceptions are not indeed innate, nor could ever have been awakened in us without experience; but they are not copies of it: experience is not their prototype; it is only the occasion by which they are irresistibly suggested. The appearances in nature excite in us, by an inherent law, ideas of those invisible things which are the causes of the visible appearances, and on whose laws those appearances depend; and we then perceive that these things must have pre-existed to render the appearances possible; just as (to use a frequent illustration of Coleridge's) we see, before we know that we have eyes: but, when once this is known to us, we perceive that eyes must have pre-existed to enable us to see. Among the truths which are thus known *à priori*, by occasion of experience, but not themselves the subjects of experience, Coleridge includes the fundamental doctrines of religion and morals, the principles of mathematics, and the ultimate laws even of physical nature; which he contends cannot be proved by experience, though they must necessarily be consistent with it, and would, if we knew them perfectly, enable us to account for all observed facts, and to predict all those which are as yet unobserved.

It is not necessary to remind any one who concerns himself with such subjects, that between the partisans of these two opposite doctrines there reigns a *bellum internecinum*. Neither side is sparing in the imputation of intellectual and moral obliquity to the perceptions, and of pernicious consequences to the creed, of its antagonists. Sensualism is the common term of abuse for the one philosophy; mysticism, for the other. The one doctrine is accused of making men beasts; the

other, lunatics. It is the unaffected belief of numbers on one side of the controversy, that their adversaries are actuated by a desire to break loose from moral and religious obligation ; and of numbers on the other, that their opponents are either men fit for Bedlam, or who cunningly pander to the interests of hierarchies and aristocracies by manufacturing superfine new arguments in favor of old prejudices. It is almost needless to say, that those who are freest with these mutual accusations are seldom those who are most at home in the real intricacies of the question, or who are best acquainted with the argumentative strength of the opposite side, or even of their own. But, without going to these extreme lengths, even sober men on both sides take no charitable view of the tendencies of each other's opinions.

It is affirmed that the doctrine of Locke and his followers, that all knowledge is experience generalized, leads by strict logical consequence to atheism ; that Hume and other sceptics were right when they contended that it is impossible to prove a God on grounds of experience ; and Coleridge (like Kant) maintains positively, that the ordinary argument for a Deity, from marks of design in the universe, or, in other words, from the resemblance of the order in nature to the effects of human skill and contrivance, is not tenable. It is further said, that the same doctrine annihilates moral obligation ; reducing morality either to the blind impulses of animal sensibility, or to a calculation of prudential consequences, both equally fatal to its essence. Even science, it is affirmed, loses the character of science in this view of it, and becomes

empiricism, — a mere enumeration and arrangement of facts, not explaining nor accounting for them : since a fact is only then accounted for, when we are made to see in it the manifestation of laws, which, as soon as they are perceived at all, are perceived to be *necessary*. These are the charges brought by the transcendental philosophers against the school of Locke, Hartley, and Bentham. They, in their turn, allege that the transcendentalists make imagination, and not observation, the criterion of truth ; that they lay down principles under which a man may enthrone his wildest dreams in the chair of philosophy, and impose them on mankind as intuitions of the pure reason : which has, in fact, been done in all ages, by all manner of mystical enthusiasts. And even if, with gross inconsistency, the private revelations of any individual Behmen or Swedenborg be disowned, or, in other words, outvoted (the only means of discrimination, which, it is contended, the theory admits of), this is still only substituting, as the test of truth, the dreams of the majority for the dreams of each individual. Whoever form a strong enough party may at any time set up the immediate perceptions of *their* reason, that is to say, any reigning prejudice, as a truth independent of experience, — a truth not only requiring no proof, but to be believed in opposition to all that appears proof to the mere understanding ; nay, the more to be believed, because it cannot be put into words and into the logical form of a proposition without a contradiction in terms : for no less authority than this is claimed by some transcendentalists for their *à-priori* truths. And thus a ready mode is provided, by which whoever is on the strongest side may dogmatize at his

ease, and, instead of proving his propositions, may rail at all who deny them, as bereft of "the vision and the faculty divine," or blinded to its plainest revelations by a corrupt heart.

This is a very temperate statement of what is charged by these two classes of thinkers against each other. How much of either representation is correct cannot conveniently be discussed in this place. In truth, a system of consequences from an opinion, drawn by an adversary, is seldom of much worth. Disputants are rarely sufficiently masters of each other's doctrines to be good judges what is fairly deducible from them, or how a consequence which seems to flow from one part of the theory may or may not be defeated by another part. To combine the different parts of a doctrine with one another, and with all admitted truths, is not indeed a small trouble, nor one which a person is often inclined to take for other people's opinions. Enough if each does it for his own, which he has a greater interest in, and is more disposed to be just to. Were we to search among men's recorded thoughts for the choicest manifestations of human imbecility and prejudice, our specimens would be mostly taken from their opinions of the opinions of one another. Imputations of horrid consequences ought not to bias the judgment of any person capable of independent thought. Coleridge himself says (in the twenty-fifth Aphorism of his "Aids to Reflection"), "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."

As to the fundamental difference of opinion respect-

ing the sources of our knowledge (apart from the corollaries which either party may have drawn from its own principle, or imputed to its opponent's), the question lies far too deep in the recesses of psychology for us to discuss it here. The lists having been open ever since the dawn of philosophy, it is not wonderful that the two parties should have been forced to put on their strongest armor both of attack and of defence. The question would not so long have remained a question, if the more obvious arguments on either side had been unanswerable. Each party has been able to urge in its own favor numerous and striking facts, to reconcile which with the opposite theory has required all the metaphysical resources which that theory could command. It will not be wondered at, then, that we here content ourselves with a bare statement of our opinion. It is, that the truth on this much-debated question lies with the school of Locke and of Bentham. (The nature and laws of things in themselves, or of the hidden causes of the phenomena which are the objects of experience, appear to us radically inaccessible to the human faculties.) We see no ground for believing that any thing can be the object of our knowledge except our experience, and what can be inferred from our experience by the analogies of experience itself; nor that there is any idea; feeling, or power, in the human mind, which, in order to account for it, requires that its origin should be referred to any other source. We are therefore at issue with Coleridge on the central idea of his philosophy; and we find no need of, and no use for, the peculiar technical terminology which he and his masters the Germans have introduced into philosophy

for the double purpose of giving logical precision to doctrines which we do not admit, and of marking a relation between those abstract doctrines and many concrete experimental truths, which this language, in our judgment, serves, not to elucidate, but to disguise and obscure. Indeed, but for these peculiarities of language, it would be difficult to understand how the reproach of mysticism (by which nothing is meant in common parlance but unintelligibleness) has been fixed upon Coleridge and the Germans in the minds of many, to whom doctrines substantially the same, when taught in a manner more superficial, and less fenced round against objections, by Reid and Dugald Stewart, have appeared the plain dictates of "common sense," successfully asserted against the subtleties of metaphysics.

Yet, though we think the doctrines of Coleridge and the Germans, in the pure science of mind, erroneous, and have no taste for their peculiar terminology, we are far from thinking, that even in respect of this, the least valuable part of their intellectual exertions, those philosophers have lived in vain. The doctrines of the school of Locke stood in need of an entire renovation: to borrow a physiological illustration from Coleridge, they required, like certain secretions of the human body, to be re-absorbed into the system, and secreted afresh. In what form did that philosophy generally prevail throughout Europe? In that of the shallowest set of doctrines, which, perhaps, were ever passed off upon a cultivated age as a complete psychological system, — the ideology of Condillac and his school; a system which affected to resolve all the phenomena of the human mind into sensation, by a process which



essentially consisted in merely *calling* all states of mind, however heterogeneous, by that name; a philosophy now acknowledged to consist solely of a set of verbal generalizations, explaining nothing, distinguishing nothing, leading to nothing. That men should begin by sweeping this away was the first sign that the age of real psychology was about to commence. In England, the case, though different, was scarcely better. The philosophy of Locke, as a popular doctrine, had remained nearly as it stood in his own book; which, as its title implies, did not pretend to give an account of any but the intellectual part of our nature; which, even within that limited sphere, was but the commencement of a system; and, though its errors and defects as such have been exaggerated beyond all just bounds, it did expose many vulnerable points to the searching criticism of the new school. The least imperfect part of it, the purely logical part, had almost dropped out of sight. With respect to those of Locke's doctrines which are properly metaphysical, — however the sceptical part of them may have been followed up by others, and carried beyond the point at which he stopped, — the only one of his successors who attempted and achieved any considerable improvement and extension of the analytical part, and thereby added any thing to the explanation of the human mind on Locke's principles, was Hartley. But Hartley's doctrines, so far as they are true, were so much in advance of the age, and the way had been so little prepared for them by the general tone of thinking which yet prevailed, even under the influence of Locke's writings, that the philosophic world did not deem them worthy of being

attended to. Reid and Stewart were allowed to run them down uncontradicted; Brown, though a man of a kindred genius, had evidently never read them; and but for the accident of their being taken up by Priestley, who transmitted them as a kind of heirloom to his Unitarian followers, the name of Hartley might have perished, or survived only as that of a visionary physician, the author of an exploded physiological hypothesis. It perhaps required all the violence of the assaults made by Reid and the German school upon Locke's system to recall men's minds to Hartley's principles, as alone adequate to the solution, upon that system, of the peculiar difficulties which those assailants pressed upon men's attention as altogether insoluble by it. We may here notice, that Coleridge, before he adopted his later philosophical views, was an enthusiastic Hartleian; so that his abandonment of the philosophy of Locke cannot be imputed to unacquaintance with the highest form of that philosophy which had yet appeared. That he should pass through that highest form without stopping at it is itself a strong presumption that there were more difficulties in the question than Hartley had solved. That any thing has since been done to solve them, we probably owe to the revolution in opinion, of which Coleridge was one of the organs; and, even in abstract metaphysics, his writings, and those of his school of thinkers, are the richest mine from whence the opposite school can draw the materials for what has yet to be done to perfect their own theory.

If we now pass from the purely abstract to the concrete and practical doctrines of the two schools, we shall see still more clearly the necessity of the re-action,

and the great service rendered to philosophy by its authors. This will be best manifested by a survey of the state of practical philosophy in Europe, as Coleridge and his compeers found it, towards the close of the last century.

The state of opinion in the latter half of the eighteenth century was by no means the same on the Continent of Europe and in our own island; and the difference was still greater in appearance than it was in reality. In the more advanced nations of the Continent, the prevailing philosophy had done its work completely: it had spread itself over every department of human knowledge; it had taken possession of the whole Continental mind; and scarcely one educated person was left who retained any allegiance to the opinions or the institutions of ancient times. In England, the native country of compromise, things had stopped far short of this; the philosophical movement had been brought to a halt in an early stage; and a peace had been patched up, by concessions on both sides, between the philosophy of the time and its traditional institutions and creeds. Hence the aberrations of the age were generally, on the Continent, at that period, the extravagances of new opinions; in England, the corruptions of old ones.

To insist upon the deficiencies of the Continental philosophy of the last century, or, as it is commonly termed, the French philosophy, is almost superfluous. That philosophy is indeed as unpopular in this country as its bitterest enemy could desire. If its faults were as well understood as they are much railed at, criticism might be considered to have finished its work. But that this is not yet the case, the nature of the imputa-

tions currently made upon the French philosophers sufficiently proves; many of these being as inconsistent with a just philosophic comprehension of their system of opinions as with charity towards the men themselves. It is not true, for example, that any of them denied moral obligation, or sought to weaken its force. So far were they from meriting this accusation, that they could not even tolerate the writers, who, like Helvetius, ascribed a selfish origin to the feelings of morality, resolving them into a sense of interest. Those writers were as much cried down among the *philosophes* themselves, and what was true and good in them (and there is much that is so) met with as little appreciation, then as now. The error of the philosophers was rather that they trusted too much to those feelings; believed them to be more deeply rooted in human nature than they are; to be not so dependent, as in fact they are, upon collateral influences. They thought them the natural and spontaneous growth of the human heart; so firmly fixed in it, that they would subsist unimpaired, nay, invigorated, when the whole system of opinions and observances with which they were habitually intertwined was violently torn away.

To tear away, was, indeed, all that these philosophers, for the most part, aimed at: they had no conception that any thing else was needful. At their millennium, superstition, priestcraft, error, and prejudice of every kind, were to be annihilated: some of them gradually added, that despotism and hereditary privileges must share the same fate; and, this accomplished, they never for a moment suspected that all the virtues and graces of humanity could fail to flourish, or that, when the

noxious weeds were once rooted out, the soil would stand in any need of tillage.

In this they committed the very common error of mistaking the state of things with which they had always been familiar, for the universal and natural condition of mankind. They were accustomed to see the human race agglomerated in large nations, all (except here and there a madman or a malefactor) yielding obedience more or less strict to a set of laws prescribed by a few of their own number, and to a set of moral rules prescribed by each other's opinion; renouncing the exercise of individual will and judgment, except within the limits imposed by these laws and rules; and acquiescing in the sacrifice of their individual wishes, when the point was decided against them by lawful authority; or persevering only in hopes of altering the opinion of the ruling powers. Finding matters to be so generally in this condition, the philosophers apparently concluded that they could not possibly be in any other; and were ignorant by what a host of civilizing and restraining influences a state of things so repugnant to man's self-will, and love of independence, has been brought about, and how imperatively it demands the continuance of those influences as the condition of its own existence. The very first element of the social union, obedience to a government of some sort, has not been found so easy a thing to establish in the world. Among a timid and spiritless race, like the inhabitants of the vast plains of tropical countries, passive obedience may be of natural growth; though even there we doubt whether it has ever been found among any people with whom fatalism, or, in other words, submission to

the pressure of circumstances as the decree of God, did not prevail as a religious doctrine. But the difficulty of inducing a brave and warlike race to submit their individual *arbitrium* to any common umpire has always been felt to be so great, that nothing short of supernatural power has been deemed adequate to overcome it; and such tribes have always assigned to the first institution of civil society a divine origin. So differently did those judge who knew savage man by actual experience from those who had no acquaintance with him except in the civilized state. In modern Europe itself, after the fall of the Roman Empire, to subdue the feudal anarchy, and bring the whole people of any European nation into subjection to government (although Christianity in the most concentrated form of its influence was co-operating in the work), required thrice as many centuries as have elapsed since that time.

Now, if these philosophers had known human nature under any other type than that of their own age, and of the particular classes of society among whom they lived, it would have occurred to them, that wherever this habitual submission to law and government has been firmly and durably established, and yet the vigor and manliness of character which resisted its establishment have been in any degree preserved, certain requisites have existed, certain conditions have been fulfilled, of which the following may be regarded as the principal.

First, There has existed, for all who were accounted citizens, — for all who were not slaves, kept down by brute force, — a system of *education*, beginning with infancy and continued through life, of which, whatever

else it might include, one main and incessant ingredient was *restraining discipline*. To train the human being in the habit, and thence the power, of subordinating his personal impulses and aims to what were considered the ends of society; of adhering, against all temptation, to the course of conduct which those ends prescribed; of controlling in himself all the feelings which were liable to militate against those ends, and encouraging all such as tended towards them, — this was the purpose, to which every outward motive that the authority directing the system could command, and every inward power or principle which its knowledge of human nature enabled it to evoke, were endeavored to be rendered instrumental. The entire civil and military policy of the ancient commonwealths was such a system of training: in modern nations, its place has been attempted to be supplied principally by religious teaching. And whenever and in proportion as the strictness of the restraining discipline was relaxed, the natural tendency of mankind to anarchy re-asserted itself; the State became disorganized from within; mutual conflict for selfish ends neutralized the energies which were required to keep up the contest against natural causes of evil; and the nation, after a longer or briefer interval of progressive decline, became either the slave of a despotism, or the prey of a foreign invader.

The second condition of permanent political society has been found to be, the existence, in some form or other, of the feeling of allegiance, or loyalty. This feeling may vary in its objects, and is not confined to any particular form of government: but, whether in a democracy or in a monarchy, its essence is always the

same; viz., that there be in the constitution of the State *something* which is settled, something permanent, and not to be called in question,—something which, by general agreement, has a right to be where it is, and to be secure against disturbance, whatever else may change. This feeling may attach itself, as among the Jews (and, indeed, in most of the commonwealths of antiquity), to a common God or gods, the protectors and guardians of their State; or it may attach itself to certain persons, who are deemed to be, whether by divine appointment, by long prescription, or by the general recognition of their superior capacity and worthiness, the rightful guides and guardians of the rest; or it may attach itself to laws, to ancient liberties, or ordinances; or, finally (and this is the only shape in which the feeling is likely to exist hereafter), it may attach itself to the principles of individual freedom and political and social equality, as realized in institutions which as yet exist nowhere, or exist only in a rudimentary state. But, in all political societies which have had a durable existence, there has been some fixed point; something which men agreed in holding sacred; which, wherever freedom of discussion was a recognized principle, it was of course lawful to contest in theory, but which no one could either fear or hope to see shaken in practice; which, in short (except perhaps during some temporary crisis), was, in the common estimation, placed beyond discussion. And the necessity of this may easily be made evident. A State never is, nor, until mankind are vastly improved, can hope to be, for any long time, exempt from internal dissension; for there neither is, nor has ever been, any state of society



in which collisions did not occur between the immediate interests and passions of powerful sections of the people. What, then, enables society to weather these storms, and pass through turbulent times without any permanent weakening of the securities for peaceable existence? Precisely this, — that, however important the interests about which men fall out, the conflict did not affect the fundamental principles of the system of social union which happened to exist; nor threaten large portions of the community with the subversion of that on which they had built their calculations, and with which their hopes and aims had become identified. But when the questioning of these fundamental principles is, not the occasional disease or salutary medicine, but the habitual condition of the body politic, and when all the violent animosities are called forth which spring naturally from such a situation, the State is virtually in a position of civil war, and can never long remain free from it in act and fact.

The third essential condition of stability in political society is a strong and active principle of cohesion among the members of the same community or state. We need scarcely say that we do not mean nationality, in the vulgar sense of the term, — a senseless antipathy to foreigners; an indifference to the general welfare of the human race, or an unjust preference of the supposed interests of our own country; a cherishing of bad peculiarities because they are national; or a refusal to adopt what has been found good by other countries. We mean a principle of sympathy, not of hostility; of union, not of separation. We mean a feeling of common interest among those who live under the same

government, and are contained within the same natural or historical boundaries. We mean, that one part of the community do not consider themselves as foreigners with regard to another part; that they set a value on their connection; feel that they are one people; that their lot is cast together; that evil to any of their fellow-countrymen is evil to themselves; and do not desire selfishly to free themselves from their share of any common inconvenience by severing the connection. How strong this feeling was in those ancient commonwealths which attained any durable greatness, every one knows. How happily Rome, in spite of all her tyranny, succeeded in establishing the feeling of a common country among the provinces of her vast and divided empire, will appear when any one who has given due attention to the subject shall take the trouble to point it out.\* In modern times, the countries which have had that feeling

\* We are glad to quote a striking passage from Coleridge on this very subject. He is speaking of the misdeeds of England in Ireland; toward which misdeeds, this Tory, as he is called (for the Tories, who neglected him in his lifetime, show no little eagerness to give themselves the credit of his name after his death), entertained feelings scarcely surpassed by those which are excited by the masterly exposure for which we have recently been indebted to M. de Beaumont.

"Let us discharge," he says, "what may well be deemed a debt of justice from every well-educated Englishman to his Roman-Catholic fellow-subjects of the Sister Island. At least, let us ourselves understand the true cause of the evil as it now exists. To what and to whom is the present state of Ireland mainly to be attributed? This should be the question: and to this I answer aloud, that it is mainly attributable to those, who, during a period of little less than a whole century, used as a substitute what Providence had given into their hand as an opportunity; who chose to consider as superseding the most sacred duty a code of law, which could be excused only on the plea that it enabled them to perform it; to the sloth and improvidence, the weakness and wickedness, of the gentry, clergy, and governors of Ireland, who persevered in preferring intrigue, violence, and selfish expatriation, to a system of preventive and remedial measures, the efficacy of which

in the strongest degree have been the most powerful countries, — England, France, and, in proportion to their territory and resources, Holland and Switzerland; while England, in her connection with Ireland, is one of the most signal examples of the consequences of its absence. Every Italian knows why Italy is under a foreign yoke; every German knows what maintains despotism in the Austrian Empire; the evils of Spain flow as much from the absence of nationality among the Spaniards themselves as from the presence of it in their relations with foreigners; while the completest illustration of all is afforded by the republics of South America, where the

had been warranted for them alike by the whole provincial history of ancient Rome, *cui pacare subactos summa erat sapientia*, and by the happy results of the few exceptions to the contrary scheme unhappily pursued by their and our ancestors.

“I can imagine no work of genius that would more appropriately decorate the dome or wall of a senate-house than an abstract of Irish history from the landing of Strongbow to the battle of the Boyne, or to a yet later period, embodied in intelligible emblems, — an allegorical history-piece designed in the spirit of a Rubens or a Buonarotti, and with the wild lights, portentous shades, and saturated colors, of a Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Spagnoletti. To complete the great moral and political lesson by the historic contrast, nothing more would be required than by some equally effective means to possess the mind of the spectator with the state and condition of ancient Spain at less than half a century from the final conclusion of an obstinate and almost unremitting conflict of two hundred years by Agrippa's subjugation of the Cantabrians, *omnibus Hispania populis devictis et pacatis*. At the breaking-up of the empire, the West Goths conquered the country and made division of the lands. Then came eight centuries of Moorish domination. Yet so deeply had Roman wisdom impressed the fairest characters of the Roman mind, that at this very hour, if we except a comparatively insignificant portion of Arabic derivatives, the natives throughout the whole Peninsula speak a language less differing from the *Romana rustica*, or provincial Latin of the times of Lucan and Seneca, than any two of its dialects from each other. The time approaches, I trust, when our political economists may study the science of the provincial policy of the ancients in detail, under the auspices of hope, for immediate and practical purposes.” — *Church and State*, p. 161.

parts of one and the same State adhere so slightly together, that no sooner does any province think itself aggrieved by the general government, than it proclaims itself a separate nation.

These essential requisites of civil society the French philosophers of the eighteenth century unfortunately overlooked. They found, indeed, all three — at least the first and second, and most of what nourishes and invigorates the third — already undermined by the vices of the institutions and of the men that were set up as the guardians and bulwarks of them. If innovators, in their theories, disregarded the elementary principles of the social union, conservatives, in their practice, had set the first example. The existing order of things had ceased to realize those first principles: from the force of circumstances, and from the short-sighted selfishness of its administrators, it had ceased to possess the essential conditions of permanent society, and was therefore tottering to its fall. But the philosophers did not see this. Bad as the existing system was in the days of its decrepitude, according to them it was still worse when it actually did what it now only pretended to do. Instead of feeling that the effect of a bad social order, in sapping the necessary foundations of society itself, is one of the worst of its many mischiefs, the philosophers saw only, and saw with joy, that it was sapping its own foundations. In the weakening of all government, they saw only the weakening of bad government, and thought they could not better employ themselves than in finishing the task so well begun; in discrediting all that still remained of restraining discipline, because it rested on the ancient and decayed creeds

against which they made war ; in unsettling every thing which was still considered settled, making men doubtful of the few things of which they still felt certain ; and in uprooting what little remained in the people's minds of reverence for any thing above them, of respect to any of the limits which custom and prescription had set to the indulgence of each man's fancies or inclinations, or of attachment to any of the things which belonged to them as a nation, and which made them feel their unity as such.

Much of all this was, no doubt, unavoidable, and not justly matter of blame. When the vices of all constituted authorities, added to natural causes of decay, have eaten the heart out of old institutions and beliefs, while at the same time the growth of knowledge, and the altered circumstances of the age, would have required institutions and creeds different from these, even if they had remained uncorrupt, we are far from saying that any degree of wisdom on the part of speculative thinkers could avert the political catastrophes, and the subsequent moral anarchy and unsettledness, which we have witnessed and are witnessing. Still less do we pretend that those principles and influences which we have spoken of as the conditions of the permanent existence of the social union, once lost, can ever be, or should be attempted to be, revived in connection with the same institutions or the same doctrines as before. When society requires to be rebuilt, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the old plan. By the union of the enlarged views and analytic powers of speculative men with the observation and contriving sagacity of men of practice, better institutions and

better doctrines must be elaborated ; and, until this is done, we cannot hope for much improvement in our present condition. The effort to do it in the eighteenth century would have been premature, as the attempts of the Economistes (who, of all persons then living, came nearest to it, and who were the first to form clearly the idea of a social science) sufficiently testify. The time was not ripe for doing effectually any other work than that of destruction. But the work of the day should have been so performed as not to impede that of the morrow. No one can calculate what struggles, which the cause of improvement has yet to undergo, might have been spared, if the philosophers of the eighteenth century had done any thing like justice to the past. Their mistake was, that they did not acknowledge the historical value of much which had ceased to be useful, nor saw that institutions and creeds, now effete, had rendered essential services to civilization, and still filled a place in the human mind, and in the arrangements of society, which could not without great peril be left vacant. Their mistake was, that they did not recognize, in many of the errors which they assailed, corruptions of important truths, and, in many of the institutions most cankered with abuse, necessary elements of civilized society, though in a form and vesture no longer suited to the age ; and hence they involved, as far as in them lay, many great truths in a common discredit with the errors which had grown up around them. They threw away the shell, without preserving the kernel ; and, attempting to new-model society without the binding forces which hold society together, met with such success as might have been anticipated.

Now, we claim, in behalf of the philosophers of the re-actionary school, — of the school to which Coleridge belongs, — that exactly what we blame the philosophers of the eighteenth century for not doing, they have done.

Every re-action in opinion, of course, brings into view that portion of the truth which was overlooked before. It was natural that a philosophy which anathematized all that had been going on in Europe from Constantine to Luther, or even to Voltaire, should be succeeded by another, at once a severe critic of the new tendencies of society, and an impassioned vindicator of what was good in the past.) This is the easy merit of all Tory and Royalist writers. But the peculiarity of the Germano-Coleridgian school is, that they saw beyond the immediate controversy, to the fundamental principles involved in all such controversies. They were the first (except a solitary thinker here and there) who inquired, with any comprehensiveness or depth, into the inductive laws of the existence and growth of human society. They were the first to bring prominently forward the three requisites which we have enumerated as essential principles of all permanent forms of social existence; as principles, we say, and not as mere accidental advantages, inherent in the particular polity or religion which the writer happened to patronize. They were the first who pursued, philosophically and in the spirit of Baconian investigation, not only this inquiry, but others ulterior and collateral to it. They thus produced, not a piece of party advocacy, but a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, — that of a philosophy of history; not a

defence of particular ethical or religious doctrines, but a contribution, the largest made by any class of thinkers, towards the philosophy of human culture.

The brilliant light which has been thrown upon history during the last half-century has proceeded almost wholly from this school. The disrespect in which history was held by the *philosophes* is notorious : one of the soberest of them (D'Alembert, we believe) was the author of the wish, that all record whatever of past events could be blotted out. And, indeed, the ordinary mode of writing history, and the ordinary mode of drawing lessons from it, were almost sufficient to excuse this contempt. But the *philosophes* saw, as usual, what was not true, not what was. It is no wonder that they who looked on the greater part of what had been handed down from the past as sheer hindrances to man's attaining a well-being, which would otherwise be of easy attainment, should content themselves with a very superficial study of history. But the case was otherwise with those who regarded the maintenance of society at all, and especially its maintenance in a state of progressive advancement, as a very difficult task actually achieved, in however imperfect a manner, for a number of centuries, against the strongest obstacles. It was natural that they should feel a deep interest in ascertaining how this had been effected ; and should be led to inquire, both what were the requisites of the permanent existence of the body politic, and what were the conditions which had rendered the preservation of these permanent requisites compatible with perpetual and progressive improvement. And hence that series of great writers and thinkers, from Herder



to Michelet, by whom history, which was till then "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," has been made a science of causes and effects; who, by making the facts and events of the past have a meaning and an intelligible place in the gradual evolution of humanity, have at once given history, even to the imagination, an interest like romance, and afforded the only means of predicting and guiding the future, by unfolding the agencies which have produced, and still maintain, the present.\*

The same causes have naturally led the same class of thinkers to do what their predecessors never could have done for the philosophy of human culture. For the tendency of their speculations compelled them to see, in the character of the national education existing in any political society, at once the principal cause of its permanence as a society, and the chief source of its

\* There is something at once ridiculous and discouraging in the signs which daily meet us, of the Cimmerian darkness still prevailing in England (wherever recent foreign literature or the speculations of the Coleridgians have not penetrated) concerning the very existence of the views of general history which have been received throughout the continent of Europe for the last twenty or thirty years. A writer in "Blackwood's Magazine"—certainly not the least able publication of our day, nor this the least able writer in it—lately announced, with all the pomp and heraldry of triumphant genius, a discovery which was to disabuse the world of an universal prejudice, and create "the philosophy of Roman history." This is, that the Roman Empire perished, not from outward violence, but from inward decay; and that the barbarian conquerors were the renovators, not the destroyers, of its civilization. Why, there is not a schoolboy in France or Germany who did not possess this writer's discovery before him: the contrary opinion has receded so far into the past, that it must be rather a learned Frenchman or German who remembers that it was ever held. If the writer in "Blackwood" had read a line of Guizot (to go no further than the most obvious sources), he would probably have abstained from making himself very ridiculous, and his country, so far as depends upon him, the laughing-stock of Europe.

progressiveness ; the former by the extent to which that education operated as a system of restraining discipline, the latter by the degree in which it called forth and invigorated the active faculties. Besides, not to have looked upon the culture of the inward man as the problem of problems would have been incompatible with the belief which many of these philosophers entertained in Christianity, and the recognition by all of them of its historical value, and the prime part which it has acted in the progress of mankind. But here too, let us not fail to observe, they rose to principles, and did not stick in the particular case. The culture of the human being had been carried to no ordinary height, and human nature had exhibited many of its noblest manifestations, not in Christian countries only, but in the ancient world, — in Athens, Sparta, Rome : nay, even barbarians, as the Germans, or still more unmitigated savages, the wild Indians, and again the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Arabs, all had their own education, their own culture, — a culture which, whatever might be its tendency upon the whole, had been successful in some respect or other. Every form of polity, every condition of society, whatever else it had done, had formed its type of national character. What that type was, and how it had been made what it was, were questions which the metaphysician might overlook : the historical philosopher could not. Accordingly, the views respecting the various elements of human culture, and the causes influencing the formation of national character, which pervade the writings of the Germano-Coleridgian school, throw into the shade every thing which had been effected before, or which has been attempted simultane-

ously by any other school. Such views are, more than any thing else, the characteristic feature of the Goethian period of German literature; and are richly diffused through the historical and critical writings of the new French school, as well as of Coleridge and his followers.

In this long though most compressed dissertation on the Continental philosophy preceding the re-action, and on the nature of the re-action so far as directed against that philosophy, we have unavoidably been led to speak rather of the movement itself than of Coleridge's particular share in it; which, from his posteriority in date, was necessarily a subordinate one. And it would be useless, even did our limits permit, to bring together, from the scattered writings of a man who produced no systematic work, any of the fragments which he may have contributed to an edifice still incomplete, and even the general character of which we can have rendered very imperfectly intelligible to those who are not acquainted with the theory itself. Our object is to invite to the study of the original sources, not to supply the place of such a study. What was peculiar to Coleridge will be better manifested when we now proceed to review the state of popular philosophy immediately preceding him in our own island; which was different, in some material respects, from the contemporaneous Continental philosophy.

In England, the philosophical speculations of the age had not, except in a few highly metaphysical minds (whose example rather served to deter than to invite others), taken so audacious a flight, nor achieved any thing like so complete a victory over the counteracting

influences, as on the Continent. There is in the English mind, both in speculation and in practice, a highly salutary shrinking from all extremes; but, as this shrinking is rather an instinct of caution than a result of insight, it is too ready to satisfy itself with any medium merely because it is a medium, and to acquiesce in a union of the disadvantages of both extremes instead of their advantages. The circumstances of the age, too, were unfavorable to decided opinions. The repose which followed the great struggles of the Reformation and the Commonwealth; the final victory over Popery and Puritanism, Jacobitism and Republicanism, and the lulling of the controversies which kept speculation and spiritual consciousness alive; the lethargy which came upon all governors and teachers, after their position in society became fixed; and the growing absorption of all classes in material interests, — caused a state of mind to diffuse itself, with less of deep inward workings, and less capable of interpreting those it had, than had existed for centuries. The age seemed smitten with an incapacity of producing deep or strong feeling, such as at least could ally itself with meditative habits. There were few poets, and none of a high order; and philosophy fell mostly into the hands of men of a dry prosaic nature, who had not enough of the materials of human feeling in them to be able to imagine any of its more complex and mysterious manifestations; all of which they either left out of their theories, or introduced them with such explanations as no one who had experienced the feelings could receive as adequate. An age like this, an age without earnestness, was the natural era of compromises and half-convictions.

To make out a case for the feudal and ecclesiastical institutions of modern Europe was by no means impossible: they had a meaning, had existed for honest ends, and an honest theory of them might be made. But the administration of those institutions had long ceased to accord with any honest theory. It was impossible to justify them in principle, except on grounds which condemned them in practice; and grounds of which there was, at any rate, little or no recognition in the philosophy of the eighteenth century. The natural tendency, therefore, of that philosophy, everywhere but in England, was to seek the extinction of those institutions. In England, it would doubtless have done the same, had it been strong enough; but, as this was beyond its strength, an adjustment was come to between the rival powers. What neither party cared about, the *ends* of existing institutions, the work that was to be done by teachers and governors, was flung overboard. The wages of that work the teachers and governors did care about; and those wages were secured to them. The existing institutions in Church and State were to be preserved inviolate, in outward semblance at least; but were required to be, practically, as much a nullity as possible. The Church continued to "rear her mitred front in courts and palaces," but not, as in the days of Hildebrand or Becket, as the champion of arts against arms, of the serf against the seigneur, peace against war, or spiritual principles and powers against the domination of animal force; nor even (as in the days of Latimer and John Knox) as a body divinely commissioned to train the nation in a knowledge of God, and obedience to his laws, whatever became of temporal principalities

and powers ; and whether this end might most effectually be compassed by their assistance, or by trampling them under foot. No ; but the people of England liked old things, and nobody knew how the place might be filled which the doing-away with so conspicuous an institution would leave vacant, and *quieta ne movere* was the favorite doctrine of those times : therefore, on condition of not making too much noise about religion, or taking it too much in earnest, the Church was supported, even by philosophers, — as a “bulwark against fanaticism,” a sedative to the religious spirit, to prevent it from disturbing the harmony of society or the tranquillity of states. The clergy of the Establishment thought they had a good bargain on these terms, and kept its conditions very faithfully.

The State, again, was no longer considered, according to the old ideal, as a concentration of the force of all the individuals of the nation in the hands of certain of its members, in order to the accomplishment of whatever could be best accomplished by systematic co-operation. It was found that the State was a bad judge of the wants of society ; that it in reality cared very little for them : and when it attempted any thing beyond that police against crime, and arbitration of disputes, which are indispensable to social existence, the private sinister interest of some class or individual was usually the prompter of its proceedings. The natural inference would have been, that the constitution of the State was somehow not suited to the existing wants of society ; having indeed descended, with scarcely any modifications that could be avoided, from a time when the most prominent exigencies of society

were quite different. This conclusion, however, was shrunk from; and it required the peculiarities of very recent times, and the speculations of the Bentham school, to produce even any considerable tendency that way. The existing Constitution, and all the arrangements of existing society, continued to be applauded as the best possible. The celebrated theory of the three powers was got up, which made the excellence of our Constitution consist in doing less harm than would be done by any other form of government. Government altogether was regarded as a necessary evil, and was required to hide itself, — to make itself as little felt as possible. The cry of the people was not, "Help us;" "Guide us;" "Do for us the things we cannot do; and instruct us, that we may do well those which we can" (and truly such requirements from such rulers would have been a bitter jest): the cry was, "Let us alone." Power to decide questions of *meum* and *tuum*, to protect society from open violence, and from some of the most dangerous modes of fraud, could not be withheld: these functions the Government was left in possession of; and to these it became the expectation of the public that it should confine itself.

Such was the prevailing tone of English belief in temporals. What was it in spirituals? Here, too, a similar system of compromise had been at work. Those who pushed their philosophical speculations to the denial of the received religious belief, whether they went to the extent of infidelity or only of heterodoxy, met with little encouragement: neither religion itself, nor the received forms of it, were at all shaken by the few attacks which were made upon them from without.

The philosophy, however, of the time, made itself felt as effectually in another fashion: it pushed its way *into* religion. The *à-priori* arguments for a God were first dismissed. This was indeed inevitable. The internal evidences of Christianity shared nearly the same fate: if not absolutely thrown aside, they fell into the background, and were little thought of. The doctrine of Locke, that we have no *innate* moral sense, perverted into the doctrine that we have no moral sense at all, made it appear that we had not any capacity of judging, from the doctrine itself, whether it was worthy to have come from a righteous Being. In forgetfulness of the most solemn warnings of the Author of Christianity, as well as of the apostle who was the main diffuser of it through the world, belief in his religion was left to stand upon miracles, — a species of evidence, which, according to the universal belief of the early Christians themselves, was by no means peculiar to true religion; and it is melancholy to see on what frail reeds able defenders of Christianity preferred to rest, rather than upon that better evidence which alone gave to their so-called evidences any value as a collateral confirmation. In the interpretation of Christianity, the palpiest *bibliolatry* prevailed, — if (with Coleridge) we may so term that superstitious worship of particular texts, which persecuted Galileo, and, in our own day, anathematized the discoveries of geology. Men whose faith in Christianity rested on the literal infallibility of the sacred volume shrank in terror from the idea that it could have been included in the scheme of Providence, that the human opinions and mental habits of the particular writers should be allowed to mix with and color



their mode of conceiving and of narrating the divine transactions. Yet this slavery to the letter has not only raised every difficulty which envelops the most unimportant passage in the Bible into an objection to revelation, but has paralyzed many a well-meant effort to bring Christianity home, as a consistent scheme, to human experience, and capacities of apprehension; as if there was much of it which it was more prudent to leave *in nubibus*, lest, in the attempt to make the mind seize hold of it as a reality, some text might be found to stand in the way. It might have been expected that this idolatry of the words of Scripture would at least have saved its doctrines from being tampered with by human notions: but the contrary proved to be the effect; for the vague and sophistical mode of interpreting texts, which was necessary in order to reconcile what was manifestly irreconcilable, engendered a habit of playing fast and loose with Scripture, and finding in, or leaving out of it, whatever one pleased. Hence, while Christianity was, in theory and in intention, received and submitted to, with even "prostration of the understanding" before it, much alacrity was in fact displayed in *accommodating* it to the received philosophy, and even to the popular notions of the time. To take only one example, but so signal a one as to be *instar omnium*. If there is any one requirement of Christianity less doubtful than another, it is that of being spiritually-minded; of loving and practising good from a pure love, simply because it is good. But one of the crotchets of the philosophy of the age was, that all virtue is self-interest; and accordingly, in the text-book adopted by the Church (in one of its

universities) for instruction in moral philosophy, the reason for doing good is declared to be, that God is stronger than we are, and is able to damn us if we do not. This is no exaggeration of the sentiments of Paley, and hardly even of the crudity of his language.

Thus, on the whole, England had neither the benefits, such as they were, of the new ideas, nor of the old. We were just sufficiently under the influences of each to render the other powerless. We had a Government, which we respected too much to attempt to change it, but not enough to trust it with any power, or look to it for any services that were not compelled. We had a Church, which had ceased to fulfil the honest purposes of a church, but which we made a great point of keeping up as the pretence or *simulacrum* of one. We had a highly spiritual religion (which we were instructed to obey from selfish motives), and the most mechanical and worldly notions on every other subject; and we were so much afraid of being wanting in reverence to each particular syllable of the book which contained our religion, that we let its most important meanings slip through our fingers, and entertained the most grovelling conceptions of its spirit and general purposes. This was not a state of things which could recommend itself to any earnest mind. It was sure, in no great length of time, to call forth two sorts of men: the one demanding the extinction of the institutions and creeds which had hitherto existed; the other, that they be made a reality: the one pressing the new doctrines to their utmost consequences, the other re-asserting the best meaning and purposes of the old. The first type

attained its greatest height in Bentham; the last, in Coleridge.

We hold that these two sorts of men, who seem to be, and believe themselves to be, enemies, are in reality allies. The powers they wield are opposite poles of one great force of progression. What was really hateful and contemptible was the state which preceded them, and which each, in its way, has been striving now for many years to improve. Each ought to hail with rejoicing the advent of the other. But most of all ought an enlightened Radical or Liberal to rejoice over such a Conservative as Coleridge. For such a Radical must know, that the Constitution and Church of England, and the religious opinions and political maxims professed by their supporters, are not mere frauds, nor sheer nonsense; have not been got up originally, and all along maintained, for the sole purpose of picking people's pockets; without aiming at, or being found conducive to, any honest end during the whole process. Nothing, of which this is a sufficient account, would have lasted a tithe of five, eight, or ten centuries, in the most improving period and (during much of that period) the most improving nation in the world. These things, we may depend upon it, were not always without much good in them, however little of it may now be left: and reformers ought to hail the man as a brother-reformer who points out what this good is; what it is which we have a right to expect from things established; which they are bound to do for us, as the justification of their being established; so that they may be recalled to it, and compelled to do it, or the impossibility of their any longer doing it may be

conclusively manifested. What is any case for reform good for, until it has passed this test? What mode is there of determining whether a thing is fit to exist, without first considering what purposes it exists for, and whether it be still capable of fulfilling them?

We have not room here to consider Coleridge's Conservative philosophy in all its aspects, or in relation to all the quarters from which objections might be raised against it. We shall consider it with relation to Reformers, and especially to Benthamites. We would assist them to determine whether they would have to do with Conservative philosophers, or with Conservative dunces; and whether, since there are Tories, it be better that they should learn their Toryism from Lord Eldon, or even Sir Robert Peel, or from Coleridge.

Take, for instance, Coleridge's view of the grounds of a Church Establishment. His mode of treating any institution is to investigate what he terms the idea of it, or what in common parlance would be called the principle involved in it. The idea or principle of a national church, and of the Church of England in that character, is, according to him, the reservation of a portion of the land, or of a right to a portion of its produce, as a fund, — for what purpose? For the worship of God? For the performance of religious ceremonies? No; for the advancement of knowledge, and the civilization and cultivation of the community. This fund he does not term "church-property," but "the nationality," or national property. He considers it as destined for "the support and maintenance of a permanent class or order, with the following duties: —

“A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain-heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science; being likewise the instructors of such as constituted, or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order. The members of this latter and far more numerous body were to be distributed throughout the country, so as not to leave even the smallest integral part or division without a resident guide, guardian, and instructor; the objects and final intention of the whole order being these,—to preserve the stores and to guard the treasures of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent; finally, to secure for the nation, if not a superiority over the neighboring States, yet an equality at least, in that character of general civilization, which, equally with, or rather more than, fleets, armies, and revenue, forms the ground of its defensive and offensive power.”

This organized body, set apart and endowed for the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge, is not, in Coleridge's view, necessarily a religious corporation.

“Religion may be an indispensable ally, but is not the essential constitutive end, of that national institute, which is unfortunately, at least improperly, styled the Church; a name which, in its best sense, is exclusively appropriate to the Church of Christ. . . . The *clerisy* of the nation, or national church in its primary acceptation and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physi-

ology, of music, of military and civil architecture, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological. The last was, indeed, placed at the head of all; and of good right did it claim the precedence. But why? Because under the name of theology or divinity were contained the interpretation of languages; the conservation and tradition of past events; the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation; the continuation of the records, logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and, lastly, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia*, as it was named, — philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas.

“Theology formed only a part of the objects, the theologians formed only a portion of the clerks or clergy, of the national church. The theological order had precedence indeed, and deservedly; but not because its members were priests, whose office was to conciliate the invisible powers, and to superintend the interests that survive the grave; nor as being exclusively, or even principally, sacerdotal or templar, which, when it did occur, is to be considered as an accident of the age, a misgrowth of ignorance and oppression, a falsification of the constitutive principle, not a constituent part of the same. No: the theologians took the lead, because the science of theology was the root and the trunk of the knowledge of civilized man; because it gave unity and the circulating sap of life to all other sciences, by virtue of which alone they could be contemplated as forming collectively the living tree of knowledge. It had the precedence, because under the name Theology were comprised all the main aids, instruments, and materials of national education, the *nisus formativus* of the body politic, the shaping and informing spirit, which, educing or eliciting the latent man in all the

natives of the soil, trains them up to be citizens of the country, free subjects of the realm. And, lastly, because to divinity belong those fundamental truths which are the common groundwork of our civil and our religious duties, not less indispensable to a right view of our temporal concerns than to a rational faith respecting our immortal well-being. Not without celestial observations can even terrestrial charts be accurately constructed." — *Church and State*, chap. v.

The nationality, or national property, according to Coleridge, "cannot rightfully be, and without foul wrong to the nation never has been, alienated from its original purposes," from the promotion of "a continuing and progressive civilization," to the benefit of individuals, or any public purpose of merely economical or material interest. But the State may withdraw the fund from its actual holders for the better execution of its purposes. There is no sanctity attached to the means, but only to the ends. The fund is not dedicated to any particular scheme of religion, nor even to religion at all: religion has only to do with it in the character of an instrument of civilization, and in common with all the other instruments.

"I do not assert that the proceeds from the nationality cannot be rightfully vested, except in what we now mean by clergymen and the established clergy. I have everywhere implied the contrary. . . . In relation to the national church, Christianity, or the Church of Christ, is a blessed accident, a providential boon, a grace of God. . . . As the olive-tree is said in its growth to fertilize the surrounding soil, to invigorate the roots of the vines in its immediate neighborhood, and to improve the strength and flavor of the wines; such is the relation of the Christian and the national Church. But as the olive is not the same plant with the vine, or with the

elm or poplar (that is, the State) with which the vine is wedded ; and as the vine, with its prop, may exist, though in less perfection, without the olive, or previously to its implantation : even so is Christianity, and *à fortiori* any particular scheme of theology derived, and supposed by its partisans to be deduced, from Christianity, no essential part of the being of the national Church, however conducive or even indispensable it may be to its well-being." — Chap. vi.

What would Sir Robert Inglis, or Sir Robert Peel, or Mr. Spooner, say to such a doctrine as this? Will they thank Coleridge for this advocacy of Toryism? What would become of the three-years' debates on the Appropriation Clause, which so disgraced this country before the face of Europe? Will the ends of practical Toryism be much served by a theory under which the Royal Society might claim a part of the church-property with as good right as the bench of bishops, if, by endowing that body like the French Institute, science could be better promoted? a theory by which the State, in the conscientious exercise of its judgment, having decided that the Church of England does not fulfil the object for which the nationalty was intended, might transfer its endowments to any other ecclesiastical body, or to any other body not ecclesiastical, which it deemed more competent to fulfil those objects ; might establish any other sect, or all sects, or no sect at all, if it should deem, that, in the divided condition of religious opinion in this country, the State can no longer with advantage attempt the complete religious instruction of its people, but must for the present content itself with providing secular instruction, and such religious teaching, if any, as all can take part in ; leaving each sect to apply to



its own communion that which they all agree in considering as the keystone of the arch. We believe this to be the true state of affairs in Great Britain at the present time. We are far from thinking it other than a serious evil. We entirely acknowledge, that, in any person fit to be a teacher, the view he takes of religion will be intimately connected with the view he will take of all the greatest things which he has to teach. Unless the same teachers who give instruction on those other subjects are at liberty to enter freely on religion, the scheme of education will be, to a certain degree, fragmentary and incoherent. But the State at present has only the option of such an imperfect scheme, or of intrusting the whole business to perhaps the most unfit body for the exclusive charge of it that could be found among persons of any intellectual attainments; namely, the established clergy as at present trained and composed. Such a body would have no chance of being selected as the exclusive administrators of the nationality on any foundation but that of divine right; the ground avowedly taken by the only other school of Conservative philosophy which is attempting to raise its head in this country, — that of the new Oxford theologians.

Coleridge's merit in this matter consists, as it seems to us, in two things. First, that by setting in a clear light what a national-church establishment ought to be, and what, by the very fact of its existence, it must be held to pretend to be, he has pronounced the severest satire upon what in fact it is. There is some difference, truly, between Coleridge's church, in which the school-master forms the first step in the hierarchy, "who in

due time, and under condition of a faithful performance of his arduous duties, should succeed to the pastorate,"\* and the Church of England such as we now see. But to say the Church, and mean only the clergy, "constituted," according to Coleridge's conviction, "the first and fundamental apostasy."† He, and the thoughts which have proceeded from him, have done more than would have been effected in thrice the time by Dissenters and Radicals to make the Church ashamed of the evil of her ways, and to determine that movement of improvement from within, which has begun where it ought to begin, at the universities and among the younger clergy, and which, if this sect-ridden country is ever to be really taught, must proceed, *pari passu*, with the assault carried on from without.

Secondly, We honor Coleridge for having rescued from the discredit in which the corruptions of the English Church had involved every thing connected with it, and for having vindicated against Bentham and Adam Smith and the whole eighteenth century, the principle of an endowed class, for the cultivation of learning, and for diffusing its results among the community. That such a class is likely to be behind, instead of before, the progress of knowledge, is an induction erroneously drawn from the peculiar circumstances of the last two centuries, and in contradiction to all the rest of modern history. If we have seen much of the abuses of endowments, we have not seen what this country might be made by a proper administration of them, as we trust we shall not see what it would be without them. On this subject we are entirely at one

\* P. 57.

† Literary Remains, iii. 386.

with Coleridge, and with the other great defender of endowed establishments, Dr. Chalmers; and we consider the definitive establishment of this fundamental principle to be one of the permanent benefits which political science owes to the Conservative philosophers.

Coleridge's theory of the Constitution is not less worthy of notice than his theory of the Church. The Delolme and Blackstone doctrine, the balance of the three powers, he declares he never could elicit one ray of common sense from, no more than from the balance of trade.\* There is, however, according to him, an Idea of the Constitution, of which he says, —

“Because our whole history, from Alfred onwards, demonstrates the continued influence of such an idea, or ultimate aim, in the minds of our forefathers, in their characters and functions as public men, alike in what they resisted and what they claimed; in the institutions and forms of polity which they established, and with regard to those against which they more or less successfully contended; and because the result has been a progressive, though not always a direct or equable, advance in the gradual realization of the idea; and because it is actually, though (even because it is an idea) not adequately, represented in a correspondent scheme of means really existing, — we speak, and have a right to speak, of the idea itself as actually existing; that is, as a principle existing in the only way in which a principle can exist, — in the minds and consciences of the persons whose duties it prescribes, and whose rights it determines.” † This fundamental idea “is at the same time the final criterion by which all particular frames of government must be tried: for here only can we find the great constructive principles of our representative system, —

\* The Friend, first collected edition (1818), vol. ii. p. 75.

† Church and State, p. 18.

those principles in the light of which it can alone be ascertained what are excrescences, symptoms of distemperature, and marks of degeneration, and what are native growths, or changes naturally attendant on the progressive development of the original germ; symptoms of immaturity, perhaps, but not of disease; or, at worst, modifications of the growth by the defective or faulty, but remediless, or only gradually remediable, qualities of the soil and surrounding elements.\*

Of these principles he gives the following account:—

“It is the chief of many blessings derived from the insular character and circumstances of our country, that our social institutions have formed themselves out of our proper needs and interests; that, long and fierce as the birth-struggle and growing pains have been, the antagonist powers have been of our own system, and have been allowed to work out their final balance with less disturbance from external forces than was possible in the Continental States. . . . Now, in every country of civilized men, or acknowledging the rights of property, and by means of determined boundaries and common laws united into one people or nation, the two antagonist powers or opposite interests of the State, under which all other State interests are comprised, are those of *permanence* and of *progression*.”

The interest of permanence, or the Conservative interest, he considers to be naturally connected with the land and with landed property. This doctrine, false in our opinion as an universal principle, is true of England, and of all countries where landed property is accumulated in large masses.

“On the other hand,” he says, “the progression of a State in the arts and comforts of life, in the diffusion

\* Church and State p. 19.

of the information and knowledge useful or necessary for all ; in short, all advances in civilization, and the rights and privileges of citizens, — are especially connected with, and derived from, the four classes, — the mercantile, the manufacturing, the distributive, and the professional.\* (We must omit the interesting historical illustrations of this maxim.) “These four last-mentioned classes I will designate by the name of the Personal Interest, as the exponent of all movable and personal possessions, including skill and acquired knowledge, the moral and intellectual stock in trade of the professional man and the artist, no less than the raw materials, and the means of elaborating, transporting, and distributing them.” †

The interest of permanence, then, is provided for by a representation of the landed proprietors ; that of progression, by a representation of personal property and of intellectual acquirement : and while one branch of the Legislature, the Peerage, is essentially given over to the former, he considers it a part both of the general theory, and of the actual English Constitution, that the representatives of the latter should form “the clear and effectual majority of the Lower House ;” or, if not, that at least, by the added influence of public opinion, they should exercise an effective preponderance there. That “the very weight intended for the effectual counterpoise of the great landholders” has, “in the course of events, been shifted into the opposite scale ;” that the members for the towns “now constitute a large proportion of the political power and influence of the very class of men whose personal cupidity, and whose partial views of the

\* Church and State, pp. 23-4.

† *Ib.*, p. 29.

landed interest at large, they were meant to keep in check,"—these things he acknowledges; and only suggests a doubt, whether roads, canals, machinery, the press, and other influences favorable to the popular side, do not constitute an equivalent force to supply the deficiency.\*

How much better a Parliamentary Reformer, then, is Coleridge, than Lord John Russell, or any Whig who stickles for maintaining this unconstitutional omnipotence of the landed interest! If these became the principles of Tories, we should not wait long for further reform, even in our organic institutions. It is true, Coleridge disapproved of the Reform Bill, or rather of the principle, or the no-principle, on which it was supported. He saw in it (as we may surmise) the dangers of a change amounting almost to a revolution, without any real tendency to remove those defects in the machine which alone could justify a change so extensive. And, that this is nearly a true view of the matter, all parties seem to be now agreed. The Reform Bill was not calculated materially to improve the general composition of the Legislature. The good it has done, which is considerable, consists chiefly in this, that, being so great a change, it has weakened the superstitious feeling against great changes. Any good, which is contrary to the selfish interest of the dominant class, is still only to be effected by a long and arduous struggle; but improvements, which threaten no powerful body in their social importance or in their pecuniary emoluments, are no longer resisted as they once were, because of their greatness, — because of the very benefit which they

\* Church and State, pp. 31-2.

promised. Witness the speedy passing of the Poor-law Amendment and the Penny-postage Acts.

Meanwhile, though Coleridge's theory is but a mere commencement, not amounting to the first lines of a political philosophy, has the age produced any other theory of government which can stand a comparison with it as to its first principles? Let us take, for example, the Benthamic theory. The principle of this may be said to be, that, since the general interest is the object of government, a complete control over the government ought to be given to those whose interest is identical with the general interest. The authors and propounders of this theory were men of extraordinary intellectual powers, and the greater part of what they meant by it is true and important. But, when considered as the foundation of a science, it would be difficult to find, among theories proceeding from philosophers, one less like a philosophical theory, or, in the works of analytical minds, any thing more entirely unanalytical. What can a philosopher make of such complex notions as "interest" and "general interest," without breaking them down into the elements of which they are composed? If by men's interest be meant what would appear such to a calculating bystander, judging what would be good for a man during his whole life, and making no account, or but little, of the gratification of his present passions, — his pride, his envy, his vanity, his cupidity, his love of pleasure, his love of ease, — it may be questioned, whether, in this sense, the interest of an aristocracy, and still more that of a monarch, would not be as accordant with the general interest as that of either the middle or the poorer classes; and if

men's interest, in this understanding of it, usually governed their conduct, absolute monarchy would probably be the best form of government. But since men usually do what they like, often being perfectly aware that it is not for their ultimate interest, still more often that it is not for the interest of their posterity; and when they do believe that the object they are seeking is permanently good for them, almost always overrating its value, — it is necessary to consider, not who are they whose permanent interest, but who are they whose immediate interests and habitual feelings, are likely to be most in accordance with the end we seek to obtain. And, as that end (the general good) is a very complex state of things, — comprising as its component elements many requisites which are neither of one and the same nature, nor attainable by one and the same means, — political philosophy must begin by a classification of these elements, in order to distinguish those of them which go naturally together (so that the provision made for one will suffice for the rest) from those which are ordinarily in a state of antagonism, or at least of separation, and require to be provided for apart. This preliminary classification being supposed, things would, in a perfect government, be so ordered, that, corresponding to each of the great interests of society, there would be some branch or some integral part of the governing body so constituted that it should not be merely deemed by philosophers, but actually and constantly deem itself, to have its strongest interests involved in the maintenance of that one of the ends of society which it is intended to be the guardian of. This, we say, is the thing to be aimed at, — the type of perfection in a polit-



ical constitution. Not that there is a possibility of making more than a limited approach to it in practice: a government must be composed out of the elements already existing in society; and the distribution of power in the constitution cannot vary much or long from the distribution of it in society itself. But wherever the circumstances of society allow any choice, wherever wisdom and contrivance are at all available, this, we conceive, is the principle of guidance; and whatever anywhere exists is imperfect and a failure, just so far as it recedes from this type.

Such a philosophy of government, we need hardly say, is in its infancy: the first step to it, the classification of the exigencies of society, has not been made. Bentham, in his "Principles of Civil Law," has given a specimen, very useful for many other purposes, but not available, nor intended to be so, for founding a theory of representation upon it. For that particular purpose we have seen nothing comparable, as far as it goes, notwithstanding its manifest insufficiency, to Coleridge's division of the interests of society into the two antagonist interests of Permanence and Progression. The Continental philosophers have, by a different path, arrived at the same division; and this is about as far, probably, as the science of political institutions has yet reached.

In the details of Coleridge's political opinions there is much good, and much that is questionable, or worse. In political economy especially, he writes like an arrant driveller; and it would have been well for his reputation, had he never meddled with the subject.\* But this de-

\* Yet even on this subject he has occasionally a just thought, happily expressed; as this: "Instead of the position that all things find, it would

partment of knowledge can now take care of itself. On other points we meet with far-reaching remarks, and a tone of general feeling sufficient to make a Tory's hair stand on end. Thus, in the work from which we have most quoted, he calls the State policy of the last half-century "a Cyclops with one eye, and that in the back of the head;" its measures "either a series of anachronisms, or a truckling to events instead of the science that should command them."\* He styles the great Commonwealthsmen "the stars of that narrow inter-space of blue sky between the black clouds of the First and Second Charles's reigns."† The "Literary Remains" are full of disparaging remarks on many of the heroes of Toryism and Church-of-Englandism. He sees, for instance, no difference between Whitgift and Bancroft, and Bonner and Gardiner, except that the last were the most consistent; that the former sinned against better knowledge:‡ and one of the most poignant of his writings is a character of Pitt, the very reverse of panegyrical.§ As a specimen of his practical views, we have mentioned his recommendation that the parochial clergy should begin by being schoolmasters. He urges "a different division and subdivision of the kingdom," instead of "the present barbarism, which forms an obstacle to the improvement of the country, of much greater magnitude than men are generally

be less equivocal and far more descriptive of the fact to say, that things are always finding their level; which might be taken as the paraphrase or ironical definition of a storm." — *Second Lay Sermon*, p. 403.

\* Church and State, p. 69.

† *Ib.*, p. 102.

‡ *Literary Remains*, ii. 388.

§ Written in the *Morning Post*, and now (as we rejoice to see) reprinted in Mr. Gillman's biographical memoir.

aware.”\* But we must confine ourselves to instances in which he has helped to bring forward great principles, either implied in the old English opinions and institutions, or at least opposed to the new tendencies.

For example: he is at issue with the *let-alone* doctrine, or the theory that governments can do no better than to do nothing,—a doctrine generated by the manifest selfishness and incompetence of modern European governments, but of which, as a general theory, we may now be permitted to say, that one half of it is true, and the other half false. All who are on a level with their age now readily admit that government ought not to *interdict* men from publishing their opinions, pursuing their employments, or buying and selling their goods, in whatever place or manner they deem the most advantageous. Beyond suppressing force and fraud, governments can seldom, without doing more harm than good, attempt to chain up the free agency of individuals. But does it follow from this that government cannot exercise a free agency of its own?—that it cannot beneficially employ its powers, its means of information, and its pecuniary resources (so far surpassing those of any other association or of any individual), in promoting the public welfare by a thousand means which individuals would never think of, would have no sufficient motives to attempt, or no sufficient powers to accomplish? To confine ourselves to one, and that a limited, view of the subject: a State ought to be considered as a great benefit-society, or mutual-insurance company, for helping (under the necessary regulations

\* Literary Remains, p. 56.

for preventing abuse) that large proportion of its members who cannot help themselves.

“Let us suppose,” says Coleridge, “the negative ends of a State already attained,—namely, its own safety by means of its own strength, and the protection of person and property for all its members: there will then remain its positive ends,—

1. To make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual.
2. To secure to each of its members the hope of bettering his own condition, or that of his children.
3. The development of those faculties which are essential to his humanity; that is, to his rational and moral being.”\*

In regard to the two former ends, he of course does not mean that they can be accomplished merely by making laws to that effect; or that, according to the wild doctrines now afloat, it is the fault of the government if every one has not enough to eat and drink. But he means that government can do something directly, and very much indirectly, to promote even the physical comfort of the people; and that, if, besides making a proper use of its own powers, it would exert itself to teach the people what is in theirs, indigence would soon disappear from the face of the earth.

Perhaps, however, the greatest service which Coleridge has rendered to politics in his capacity of a Conservative philosopher, though its fruits are mostly yet to come, is in reviving the idea of a *trust* inherent in landed property. The land, the gift of nature, the source of subsistence to all, and the foundation of every thing that influences our physical well-being, cannot be considered a subject of *property* in the same absolute sense in which men are deemed proprietors of

\* Second Lay Sermon, p. 414.

that in which no one has any interest but themselves, — that which they have actually called into existence by their own bodily exertion. As Coleridge points out, such a notion is altogether of modern growth.

“The very idea of individual or private property in our present acceptation of the term, and according to the current notion of the right to it, was originally confined to movable things; and the more movable, the more susceptible of the nature of property.”\*

By the early institutions of Europe, property in land was a public function, created for certain public purposes, and held under condition of their fulfilment; and as such, we predict, under the modifications suited to modern society, it will again come to be considered. In this age, when every thing is called in question, and when the foundation of private property itself needs to be argumentatively maintained against plausible and persuasive sophisms, one may easily see the danger of mixing up what is not really tenable with what is; and the impossibility of maintaining an absolute right in an individual to an unrestricted control, a *jus utendi et abutendi*, over an unlimited quantity of the mere raw material of the globe, to which every other person could originally make out as good a natural title as himself. It will certainly not be much longer tolerated, that agriculture should be carried on (as Coleridge expresses it) on the same principles as those of trade; “that a gentleman should regard his estate as a merchant his cargo, or a shopkeeper his stock;” † that he should be allowed to deal with it as if it only existed to

\* Second Lay Sermon, p. 414.

† *Ib.*, p. 414.

yield rent to him, not food to the numbers whose hands till it; and should have a right, and a right possessing all the sacredness of property, to turn them out by hundreds, and make them perish on the high road, as has been done before now by Irish landlords. We believe it will soon be thought, that a mode of property in land, which has brought things to this pass, has existed long enough.

We shall not be suspected (we hope) of recommending a general resumption of landed possessions, or the depriving any one, without compensation, of any thing which the law gives him. But we say, that, when the State allows any one to exercise ownership over more land than suffices to raise by his own labor his subsistence and that of his family, it confers on him power over other human beings, — power affecting them in their most vital interests; and that no notion of private property can bar the right which the State inherently possesses, to require that the power which it has so given shall not be abused. We say also, that, by giving this direct power over so large a portion of the community, indirect power is necessarily conferred over all the remaining portion; and this, too, it is the duty of the State to place under proper control. Further, the tenure of land, the various rights connected with it, and the system on which its cultivation is carried on, are points of the utmost importance both to the economical and to the moral well-being of the whole community. And the State fails in one of its highest obligations, unless it takes these points under its particular superintendence; unless, to the full extent of its power, it takes means of providing that the manner

in which land is held, the mode and degree of its division, and every other peculiarity which influences the mode of its cultivation, shall be the most favorable possible for making the best use of the land, for drawing the greatest benefit from its productive resources, for securing the happiest existence to those employed on it, and for setting the greatest number of hands free to employ their labor for the benefit of the community in other ways. We believe that these opinions will become, in no very long period, universal throughout Europe; and we gratefully bear testimony to the fact, that the first among us who has given the sanction of philosophy to so great a reform in the popular and current notions is a Conservative philosopher.

Of Coleridge as a moral and religious philosopher (the character which he presents most prominently in his principal works), there is neither room, nor would it be expedient for us, to speak more than generally. On both subjects, few men have ever combined so much earnestness with so catholic and unsectarian a spirit. "We have imprisoned," says he, "our own conceptions by the lines which we have drawn in order to exclude the conceptions of others. *J'ai trouvé que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas tant en ce qu'elles nient.*"\* That almost all sects, both in philosophy and religion, are right in the positive part of their tenets, though commonly wrong in the negative, is a doctrine which he professes as strongly as the eclectic school in France. Almost all errors he holds to be "truths misunderstood," "half-truths taken as the whole," though not

\* Biographia Literaria, ed. 1817, vol. i. p. 249.

the less, but the more, dangerous on that account.\* Both the theory and practice of enlightened tolerance, in matters of opinion, might be exhibited in extracts from his writings, more copiously than in those of any other writer we know; though there are a few (and but a few) exceptions to his own practice of it. In the theory of ethics, he contends against the doctrine of general consequences, and holds, that *for man* "to obey the simple unconditional commandment of eschewing every act that implies a self-contradiction;" so to act as to "be able, without involving any contradiction, to will that the maxim of thy conduct should be the law of all intelligent beings, — is the one universal and sufficient principle and guide of morality." † Yet even a utilitarian can have little complaint to make of a philosopher who lays it down that "the *outward* object of virtue" is "the greatest producible sum of happiness of all men," and that "happiness in its proper sense is but the continuity and sum-total of the pleasure which is allotted or happens to a man." ‡

But his greatest object was to bring into harmony religion and philosophy. He labored incessantly to establish, that "the Christian faith — in which," says he, "I include every article of belief and doctrine professed by the first reformers in common" — is not only divine truth, but also "the perfection of human intelligence." § All that Christianity has revealed, philosophy, according to him, can prove, though there is much

\* Literary Remains, iii. 145.

† The Friend, vol. i. pp. 256 and 340.

‡ Aids to Reflection, pp. 37 and 39.

§ Preface to the Aids to Reflection.



which it could never have discovered: human reason, once strengthened by Christianity, can evolve all the Christian doctrines from its own sources.\* Moreover, "if infidelity is not to overspread England as well as France,"† the Scripture, and every passage of Scripture, must be submitted to this test; inasmuch as "the compatibility of a document with the conclusions of self-evident reason, and with the laws of conscience, is a condition *à priori* of any evidence adequate to the proof of its having been revealed by God;" and this, he says, is no philosophical novelty, but a principle "clearly laid down both by Moses and St. Paul."‡ He thus goes quite as far as the Unitarians in making man's reason and moral feelings a test of revelation; but differs *toto cælo* from them in their rejection of its mysteries, which he regards as the highest philosophic truths; and says, that "the Christian to whom, after a long profession of Christianity, the mysteries remain as much mysteries as before, is in the same state as a schoolboy with regard to his arithmetic; to whom the *facit* at the end of the examples in his ciphering-book is the whole ground for his assuming that such and such figures amount to so and so."

These opinions are not likely to be popular in the religious world, and Coleridge knew it: "I quite calculate," § said he once, "on my being one day or other holden in worse repute by many Christians than the 'Unitarians' and even 'Infidels.' It must be undergone by every one who loves the truth, for its own sake, beyond all other things." For our part, we are not

\* Literary Remains, vol. i. p. 388.

† *Ib.*, iii. 263.

‡ *Ib.*, iii. p. 293.

§ Table Talk, 2d ed. p. 91

bound to defend him ; and we must admit, that, in his attempt to arrive at theology by way of philosophy, we see much straining, and most frequently, as it appears to us, total failure. The question, however, is, not whether Coleridge's attempts are successful, but whether it is desirable or not that such attempts should be made. Whatever some religious people may think, philosophy will and must go on, ever seeking to understand whatever can be made understandable ; and, whatever some philosophers may think, there is little prospect at present that philosophy will take the place of religion, or that any philosophy will be speedily received in this country, unless supposed not only to be consistent with, but even to yield collateral support to, Christianity. What is the use, then, of treating with contempt the idea of a religious philosophy ? Religious philosophies are among the things to be looked for ; and our main hope ought to be, that they may be such as fulfil the conditions of a philosophy, — the very foremost of which is unrestricted freedom of thought. There is no philosophy possible where fear of consequences is a stronger principle than love of truth ; where speculation is paralyzed, either by the belief that conclusions honestly arrived at will be punished by a just and good Being with eternal damnation, or by seeing in every text of Scripture a foregone conclusion, with which the results of inquiry must, at any expense of sophistry and self-deception, be made to quadrate.

From both these withering influences, that have so often made the acutest intellects exhibit specimens of obliquity and imbecility in their theological speculations which have made them the pity of subsequent genera-

tions, Coleridge's mind was perfectly free. Faith — the faith which is placed among religious duties — was, in his view, a state of the will and of the affections, not of the understanding. Heresy, in "the literal sense and scriptural import of the word," is, according to him, "wilful error, or belief originating in some perversion of the will." He says, therefore, that there may be orthodox heretics, since indifference to truth may as well be shown on the right side of the question as on the wrong; and denounces, in strong language, the contrary doctrine of the "pseudo-Athanasius," who "interprets catholic faith by belief,"\* an act of the understanding alone. The "true Lutheran doctrine," he says, is, that "neither will truth, as a mere conviction of the understanding, save, nor error condemn. To love truth sincerely is spiritually to have truth; and an error becomes a personal error, not by its aberration from logic or history, but so far as the causes of such error are in the heart, or may be traced back to some antecedent unchristian wish or habit." † "The unmistakable passions of a factionary and a schismatic, the ostentatious display, the ambitious and dishonest arts, of a sect-founder, must be superinduced on the false doctrine before the heresy makes the man a heretic." ‡

Against the other terror, so fatal to the unshackled exercise of reason on the greatest questions, the view which Coleridge took of the authority of the Scriptures was a preservative. He drew the strongest distinction between the inspiration which he owned in the various writers, and an express dictation by the Almighty of

\* Literary Remains, iv. 193. † *Ib.*, iii. 159. ‡ *Ib.*, p. 245.

every word they wrote. "The notion of the absolute truth and divinity of every syllable of the text of the books of the Old and New Testament as we have it," he again and again asserts to be unsupported by the Scripture itself; to be one of those superstitions in which "there is a heart of unbelief;"\* to be, "if possible, still more extravagant" than the Papal infallibility; and declares that the very same arguments are used for both doctrines.† God, he believes, informed the minds of the writers with the truths he meant to reveal, and left the rest to their human faculties. He pleaded most earnestly, says his nephew and editor, for this liberty of criticism with respect to the Scriptures, as "the only middle path of safety and peace between a godless disregard of the unique and transcendent character of the Bible, taken generally, and that scheme of interpretation, scarcely less adverse to the pure spirit of Christian wisdom, which wildly arrays our faith in opposition to our reason, and inculcates the sacrifice of the latter to the former: for he threw up his hands in dismay at the language of some of our modern divinity on this point; as if a faith not founded on insight were aught else than a specious name for wilful positiveness! as if the Father of lights could require, or would accept, from the only one of his creatures whom he had endowed with reason, the sacrifice of fools! . . . Of the aweless doctrine, that God might, if he had so pleased, have given to man a religion which to human intelligence should not be rational, and exacted his faith in it, Coleridge's whole middle and later life was one

\* Literary Remains, iii. 229. See also pp. 254, 323; and many other passages in the 3d and 4th volumes.

† *Ib.*, ii. 385.

deep and solemn denial.\* He bewails "bibliolatry" as the pervading error of modern Protestant divinity, and the great stumbling-block of Christianity; and exclaims, † "Oh! might I live but to utter all my meditations on this most concerning point, . . . in what sense the Bible may be called the word of God, and how and under what conditions the unity of the Spirit is translucent through the letter, which, read as the letter merely, is the word of this and that pious but fallible and imperfect man." It is known that he did live to write down these meditations; and speculations so important will one day, it is devoutly to be hoped, be given to the world. ‡

Theological discussion is beyond our province; and it is not for us, in this place, to judge these sentiments of Coleridge: but it is clear enough that they are not the sentiments of a bigot, or of one who is to be dreaded by Liberals, lest he should illiberalize the minds of the rising generation of Tories and High-Churchmen. We think the danger is, rather, lest they should find him vastly too liberal. And yet, now, when the most orthodox divines, both in the Church and out of it, find it necessary to explain away the obvious sense of the whole first chapter of Genesis, or, failing to do that, consent to disbelieve it provisionally, on the speculation that there may hereafter be discovered a sense in which it can be believed, one would think the time gone by for expecting to learn from the Bible what it never

\* Preface to the 3d volume of the *Literary Remains*.

† *Literary Remains*, iv. 6.

‡ [This wish has, to a certain extent, been fulfilled by the publication of the series of letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, which bears the not very appropriate name of "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit."]

could have been intended to communicate, and to find in all its statements a literal truth, neither necessary nor conducive to what the volume itself declares to be the ends of revelation. Such, at least, was Coleridge's opinion; and, whatever influence such an opinion may have over Conservatives, it cannot do other than make them less bigots, and better philosophers.

But we must close this long essay, — long in itself, though short in its relation to its subject, and to the multitude of topics involved in it. We do not pretend to have given any sufficient account of Coleridge; but we hope we may have proved to some, not previously aware of it, that there is something, both in him and in the school to which he belongs, not unworthy of their better knowledge. We may have done something to show, that a Tory philosopher cannot be wholly a Tory, but must often be a better Liberal than Liberals themselves; while he is the natural means of rescuing from oblivion truths which Tories have forgotten, and which the prevailing schools of Liberalism never knew.

And, even if a Conservative philosophy were an absurdity, it is well calculated to drive out a hundred absurdities worse than itself. Let no one think that it is nothing to accustom people to give a reason for their opinion, be the opinion ever so untenable, the reason ever so insufficient. A person accustomed to submit his fundamental tenets to the test of reason will be more open to the dictates of reason on every other point. Not from him shall we have to apprehend the owl-like dread of light, the drudge-like aversion to change, which were the characteristics of the old unreasoning race of bigots. A man accustomed to con-

template the fair side of Toryism (the side that every attempt at a philosophy of it must bring to view), and to defend the existing system by the display of its capabilities as an engine of public good, — such a man, when he comes to administer the system, will be more anxious than another person to realize those capabilities, to bring the fact a little nearer to the specious theory. “Lord, enlighten thou our enemies,” should be the prayer of every true reformer; sharpen their wits, give acuteness to their perceptions, and consecutiveness and clearness to their reasoning powers. We are in danger from their folly, not from their wisdom: their weakness is what fills us with apprehension, not their strength.

For ourselves, we are not so blinded by our particular opinions as to be ignorant that in this, and in every other country of Europe, the great mass of the owners of large property, and of all the classes intimately connected with the owners of large property, are, and must be expected to be, in the main, Conservative. To suppose that so mighty a body can be without immense influence in the commonwealth, or to lay plans for effecting great changes, either spiritual or temporal, in which they are left out of the question, would be the height of absurdity. Let those who desire such changes ask themselves if they are content that these classes should be, and remain, to a man, banded against them; and what progress they expect to make, or by what means, unless a process of preparation shall be going on in the minds of these very classes, not by the impracticable method of converting them from Conservatives into Liberals, but by their being led to adopt one

liberal opinion after another as a part of Conservatism itself. The first step to this is to inspire them with the desire to systematize and rationalize their own actual creed: and the feeblest attempt to do this has an intrinsic value; far more, then, one which has so much in it, both of moral goodness and true insight, as the philosophy of Coleridge.

*Re-read Jan. 12. 78. - with  
Shaifit Essay.*



M. DE TOCQUEVILLE ON DEMOCRACY IN  
 AMERICA.\*

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*See a  
 Author  
 p. 191-*

It has been the rare fortune of M. de Tocqueville's book to have achieved an easy triumph, both over the indifference of our at once busy and indolent public to profound speculation, and over the particular obstacles which oppose the reception of speculations from a foreign, and above all from a French, source. There is some ground for the remark often made upon us by foreigners, that the character of our national intellect is insular. The general movement of the European mind sweeps past us, without our being drawn into it, or even looking sufficiently at it to discover in what direction it is tending; and, if we had not a tolerably rapid original movement of our own, we should long since have been left in the distance. The French language is almost universally cultivated on this side of the Channel; a flood of human beings perpetually ebbs and flows between London and Paris; national prejudices and animosities are becoming numbered among the things that were: yet the revolution which has taken place in the tendencies of French thought, which has changed the character of the higher literature of France, and almost that of the French language, seems hitherto,

\* Edinburgh Review, October, 1840.

as far as the English public are concerned, to have taken place in vain. At a time when the prevailing tone of French speculation is one of exaggerated reaction against the doctrines of the eighteenth century, French philosophy, with us, is still synonymous with Encyclopedism. The Englishmen may almost be numbered who are aware that France has produced any great names in prose literature since Voltaire and Rousseau; and while modern history has been receiving a new aspect from the labors of men who are not only among the profoundest thinkers, but the clearest and most popular writers, of their age, even those of their works which are expressly dedicated to the history of our own country remain mostly untranslated, and in almost all cases unread.

To this general neglect, M. de Tocqueville's book forms, however, as we have already said, a brilliant exception. Its reputation was as sudden, and is as extensive, in this country as in France, and in that large part of Europe which receives its opinions from France. The progress of political dissatisfaction, and the comparisons made between the fruits of a popular constitution on one side of the Atlantic, and of a mixed government with a preponderating aristocratic element on the other, had made the working of American institutions a party question. For many years, every book of travels in America had been a party pamphlet, or had at least fallen among partisans, and been pressed into the service of one party or of the other. When, therefore, a new book, of a grave and imposing character, on Democracy in America, made its appearance even on the other side of the British Channel, it was

not likely to be overlooked, or to escape an attempt to convert it to party purposes. If ever political writer had reason to believe that he had labored successfully to render his book incapable of such a use, M. de Tocqueville was entitled to think so. But though his theories are of an impartiality without example, and his practical conclusions lean towards Radicalism, some of his phrases are susceptible of a Tory application. One of these is "the tyranny of the majority." This phrase was forthwith adopted into the Conservative dialect, and trumpeted by Sir Robert Peel in his Tamworth oration, when, as booksellers' advertisements have since frequently reminded us, he "earnestly requested the perusal" of the book by all and each of his audience. And we believe it has since been the opinion of the country gentlemen, that M. de Tocqueville is one of the pillars of Conservatism, and his book a definitive demolition of America and of Democracy. The error has done more good than the truth would perhaps have done; since the result is, that the English public now know and read the first philosophical book ever written on Democracy, as it manifests itself in modern society; a book, the essential doctrines of which it is not likely that any future speculations will subvert, to whatever degree they may modify them; while its spirit, and the general mode in which it treats its subject, constitute it the beginning of a new era in the scientific study of politics.

The importance of M. de Tocqueville's speculations is not to be estimated by the opinions which he has adopted, be these true or false. The value of his work is less in the conclusions than in the mode of arriving

at them. He has applied, to the greatest question in the art and science of government, those principles, and methods of philosophizing, to which mankind are indebted for all the advances made by modern times in the other branches of the study of nature. It is not risking too much to affirm of these volumes, that they contain the first analytical inquiry into the influence of Democracy. For the first time, that phenomenon is treated of as something which, being a reality in nature, and no mere mathematical or metaphysical abstraction, manifests itself by innumerable properties, not by some one only; and must be looked at in many aspects before it can be made the subject even of that modest and conjectural judgment which is alone attainable respecting a fact at once so great and so new. Its consequences are by no means to be comprehended in one single description, nor in one summary verdict of approval or condemnation. So complicated and endless are their ramifications, that he who sees furthest into them will longest hesitate before finally pronouncing whether the good or the evil of its influence, on the whole, preponderates.

M. de Tocqueville has endeavored to ascertain and discriminate the various properties and tendencies of Democracy; the separate relations in which it stands towards the different interests of society, and the different moral and social requisites of human nature. In the investigation, he has, of necessity, left much undone, and much which will be better done by those who come after him, and build upon his foundations. But he has earned the double honor of being the first to make the attempt, and of having done more towards the success

of it than probably will ever again be done by any one individual. His method is, as that of a philosopher on such a subject must be, a combination of deduction with induction: his evidences are, laws of human nature, on the one hand; the example of America and France, and other modern nations, so far as applicable, on the other. His conclusions never rest on either species of evidence alone: whatever he classes as an effect of Democracy he has both ascertained to exist in those countries in which the state of society is democratic, and has also succeeded in connecting with Democracy by deductions *à priori*, tending to show that such would naturally be its influences upon beings constituted as mankind are, and placed in a world such as we know ours to be. If this be not the true Baconian and Newtonian method applied to society and government; if any better, or even any other, be possible, — M. de Tocqueville would be the first to say, *candidus imperti*: if not, he is entitled to say to political theorists, whether calling themselves philosophers or practical men, *His utere mecum*.

That part of "Democracy in America" which was first published professes to treat of the political effects of Democracy: the second is devoted to its influence on society in the widest sense; on the relations of private life, on intellect, morals, and the habits and modes of feeling which constitute national character. The last is both a newer and a more difficult subject of inquiry than the first: there are fewer who are competent, or who will even think themselves competent, to judge M. de Tocqueville's conclusions. But, we believe, no one, in the least entitled to an opinion, will refuse to

him the praise of having probed the subject to a depth which had never before been sounded; of having carried forward the controversy into a wider and a loftier region of thought; and pointed out many questions essential to the subject, which had not been before attended to, — questions which he may or may not have solved, but of which, in any case, he has greatly facilitated the solution.

The comprehensiveness of M. de Tocqueville's views, and the impartiality of his feelings, have not led him into the common infirmity of those who see too many sides to a question, — that of thinking them all equally important: he is able to arrive at a decided opinion. Nor has the more extensive range of considerations embraced in his Second Part affected practically the general conclusions which resulted from his First. They may be stated as follows: That Democracy, in the modern world, is inevitable; and that it is, on the whole, desirable, but desirable only under certain conditions, and those conditions capable, by human care and foresight, of being realized, but capable also of being missed. The progress and ultimate ascendancy of the democratic principle has, in his eyes, the character of a law of nature. He thinks it an inevitable result of the tendencies of a progressive civilization; by which expressions he by no means intends to imply either praise or censure. No human effort, no accident even, unless one which should throw back civilization itself, can avail, in his opinion, to defeat, or even very considerably to retard, this progress. But, though the fact itself appears to him removed from human control, its salutary or baneful consequences do not. Like

other great powers of nature, the tendency, though it cannot be counteracted, may be guided to good. Man cannot turn back the rivers to their source; but it rests with himself whether they shall fertilize or lay waste his fields. Left to its spontaneous course, with nothing done to prepare before it that set of circumstances under which it can exist with safety, and to fight against its worse by an apt employment of its better peculiarities, the probable effects of Democracy upon human well-being, and upon whatever is best and noblest in human character, appear to M. de Tocqueville extremely formidable. But with as much of wise effort devoted to the purpose as it is not irrational to hope for, most of what is mischievous in its tendencies may, in his opinion, be corrected, and its natural capacities of good so far strengthened and made use of as to leave no cause for regret in the old state of society, and enable the new one to be contemplated with calm contentment, if without exultation.

It is necessary to observe, that, by Democracy, M. de Tocqueville does not, in general, mean any particular form of government. He can conceive a Democracy under an absolute monarch. Nay, he entertains no small dread lest in some countries it should actually appear in that form. By Democracy, M. de Tocqueville understands equality of conditions; the absence of all aristocracy, whether constituted by political privileges, or by superiority in individual importance and social power. It is towards Democracy in this sense, towards equality between man and man, that he conceives society to be irresistibly tending. Towards Democracy in the other and more common sense, it

may or may not be travelling. Equality of conditions tends naturally to produce a popular government, but not necessarily. Equality may be equal freedom or equal servitude. America is the type of the first: France, he thinks, is in danger of falling into the second. The latter country is in the condition, which, of all that civilized societies are liable to, he regards with the greatest alarm, — a democratic state of society without democratic institutions. For, in democratic institutions, M. de Tocqueville sees, not an aggravation, but a corrective, of the most serious evils incident to a democratic state of society. No one is more opposed than he is to that species of democratic radicalism which would admit at once to the highest of political franchises untaught masses who have not yet been experimentally proved fit even for the lowest. But the ever-increasing intervention of the people, and of all classes of the people, in their own affairs, he regards as a cardinal maxim in the modern art of government: and he believes that the nations of civilized Europe, though not all equally advanced, are all advancing, towards a condition in which there will be no distinctions of political rights, no great or very permanent distinctions of hereditary wealth; when, as there will remain no classes nor individuals capable of making head against the government, unless all are, and are fit to be, alike citizens, all will, ere long, be equally slaves.

The opinion that there is this irresistible tendency to equality of conditions, is perhaps, of all the leading doctrines of the book, that which most stands in need of confirmation to English readers. M. de Tocqueville devotes but little space to the elucidation of it. To



French readers, the historical retrospect upon which it rests is familiar; and facts known to every one establish its truth so far as relates to that country. But to the English public, who have less faith in irresistible tendencies, and who, while they require for every political theory an historical basis, are far less accustomed to link together the events of history in a connected chain, the proposition will hardly seem to be sufficiently made out. Our author's historical argument is, however, deserving of their attention:—

“Let us recollect the situation of France seven hundred years ago, when the territory was divided amongst a small number of families, who were the owners of the soil, and the rulers of the inhabitants: the right of governing descended with the family inheritance from generation to generation; force was the only means by which man could act on man; and landed property was the sole source of power.

“Soon, however, the political power of the clergy was founded, and began to extend itself; the clergy opened its ranks to all classes,—to the poor and the rich, the villein and the lord; equality penetrated into the government through the church; and the being, who as a serf must have vegetated in perpetual bondage, took his place as a priest in the midst of nobles, and not unfrequently above the heads of kings.

“The different relations of men became more complicated and more numerous as society gradually became more stable and more civilized. Thence the want of civil laws was felt; and the order of legal functionaries soon rose from the obscurity of their tribunals and their dusty chambers, to appear at the court of the monarch, by the side of the feudal barons in their ermine and their mail.

“Whilst the kings were ruining themselves by their great enterprises, and the nobles exhausting their resources by private wars, the lower orders were enriching themselves by

commerce. The influence of money began to be perceptible in state affairs. The transactions of business opened a new road to power, and the financier rose to a station of political influence in which he was at once flattered and despised.

“ Gradually the spread of mental acquirements, and the increasing taste for literature and the arts, opened chances of success to talent; knowledge became a means of government, intelligence became a social power, and the man of letters took a part in the affairs of the state.

“ The value attached to the privileges of birth decreased in the exact proportion in which new paths were struck out to advancement. In the eleventh century, nobility was beyond all price; in the thirteenth, it might be purchased: it was conferred for the first time in 1270; and equality was thus introduced into the government through aristocracy itself.

“ In the course of these seven hundred years, it sometimes happened, that in order to resist the authority of the crown, or to diminish the power of their rivals, the nobles granted a certain share of political rights to the people; or, more frequently, the king permitted the inferior orders to enjoy a degree of power, with the intention of lowering the aristocracy.

“ As soon as land was held on any other than a feudal tenure, and personal property began in its turn to confer influence and power, every improvement which was introduced in commerce or manufactures was a fresh element of the equality of conditions. Henceforward every new discovery, every new want which grew up, and every new desire which craved satisfaction, was a step towards the universal level. The taste for luxury, the love of war, the sway of fashion, the most superficial as well as the deepest passions of the human heart, cooperated to enrich the poor and to impoverish the rich.

“ From the time when the exercise of the intellect became a source of power and of wealth, it is impossible not to consider every addition to science, every fresh truth, every new

idea, as a germ of power placed within the reach of the people. Poetry, eloquence, and memory, the grace of wit, the glow of imagination, the depth of thought, and all the gifts which are bestowed by Providence without respect of persons, turned to the advantage of Democracy; and, even when they were in the possession of its adversaries, they still served its cause by bringing into relief the natural greatness of man: its conquests spread, therefore, with those of civilization and knowledge; and literature became an arsenal, where the poorest and the weakest could always find weapons to their hand.

“In perusing the pages of our history, we shall scarcely meet with a single great event, in the lapse of seven hundred years, which has not turned to the advantage of equality.

“The Crusades, and the wars with the English, decimated the nobles, and divided their possessions; the erection of corporate towns introduced an element of democratic liberty into the bosom of feudal monarchy; the invention of fire-arms equalized the villein and the noble on the field of battle; printing opened the same resources to the minds of all classes; the post was established, so as to bring the same information to the door of the poor man's cottage and to the gate of the palace; and Protestantism proclaimed that all men are alike able to find the road to heaven. The discovery of America offered a thousand new paths to fortune, and placed riches and power within the reach of the adventurous and the obscure.

“If we examine what was happening in France at intervals of fifty years, beginning with the eleventh century, we shall invariably perceive that a twofold revolution has taken place in the state of society. The noble has gone down on the social ladder, and the *roturier* has gone up: the one descends as the other rises. Every half-century brings them nearer to each other.

“Nor is this phenomenon at all peculiar to France. Whithersoever we turn our eyes, we witness the same continual revolution throughout the whole of Christendom.

“Everywhere the various occurrences of national existence have turned to the advantage of Democracy: all men have aided it by their exertions. Those who have intentionally labored in its cause, and those who have served it unwittingly; those who have fought for it, and those who have declared themselves its opponents,—have all been driven along in the same track; have all labored to one end, some ignorantly, and some unwillingly: all have been blind instruments in the hands of God.

“The gradual development of the equality of conditions is therefore a providential fact, and possesses all the characteristics of a divine decree: it is universal; it is durable; it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress.

“Would it be wise to imagine that a social impulse which dates from so far back can be checked by the efforts of a generation? Is it credible that the democracy which has annihilated the feudal system, and vanquished kings, will respect the *bourgeois* and the capitalist? Will it stop now that it is grown so strong, and its adversaries so weak?

“It is not necessary that God himself should speak in order to disclose to us the unquestionable signs of his will. We can discern them in the habitual course of nature, and in the invariable tendency of events.

“The Christian nations of our age seem to me to present a most alarming spectacle. The impulse which is bearing them along is so strong that it cannot be stopped; but it is not yet so rapid that it cannot be guided. Their fate is in their hands; yet a little while, and it may be so no longer.”—*Introduction to the First Part.*

That such has been the actual course of events in modern history, nobody can doubt; and as truly in England as in France. Of old, every proprietor of land was sovereign over its inhabitants, while the cul-

tivators could not call even their bodily powers their own. It was by degrees only, and in a succession of ages, that their personal emancipation was effected, and their labor became theirs to sell for whatever they could obtain for it. They became the rich men's equals in the eye of the law: but the rich had still the making of the law, and the administering of it; and the equality was at first little more than nominal. The poor, however, could now acquire property; the path was open to them to quit their own class for a higher; their rise, even to a considerable station, gradually became a common occurrence; and, to those who acquired a large fortune, the other powers and privileges of aristocracy were successively opened, until hereditary honors have become less a power in themselves than a symbol and ornament of great riches. While individuals thus continually rose from the mass, the mass itself multiplied and strengthened; the towns obtained a voice in public affairs; the many, in the aggregate, became, even in property, more and more a match for the few; and the nation became a power, distinct from the small number of individuals who once disposed even of the crown, and determined all public affairs at their pleasure. The Reformation was the dawn of the government of public opinion. Even at that early period, opinion was not formed by the higher classes exclusively; and while the publicity of all State transactions, the liberty of petition and public discussion, the press, — and of late, above all, the periodical press, — have rendered public opinion more and more the supreme power, the same causes have rendered the formation of it less and less dependent upon the initiative of the

higher ranks. Even the direct participation of the people at large in the government, had, in various ways, been greatly extended before the political events of the last few years, when Democracy has given so signal a proof of its progress in society by the inroads it has been able to make into the political constitution ; and in spite of the alarm which has been taken by the possessors of large property, who are far more generally opposed than they had been within the present generation to any additional strengthening of the popular element in the House of Commons, there is at this moment a much stronger party for a further parliamentary reform, than many good observers thought there was, twelve years ago, for that which has already taken place.

But there is a surer mode of deciding the point than any historical retrospect. Let us look at the powers which are even now at work in society itself.

To a superficial glance at the condition of our own country, nothing can seem more unlike any tendency to equality of condition. The inequalities of property are apparently greater than in any former period of history. Nearly all the land is parcelled out, in great estates, among comparatively few families ; and it is not the large but the small properties which are in process of extinction. A hereditary and titled nobility, more potent by their vast possessions than by their social precedence, are constitutionally and really one of the great powers in the State. To form part of their order is that which every ambitious man aspires to, as the crowning glory of a successful career. The passion for equality, of which M. de Tocqueville speaks almost as if it were the great moral lever of modern times, is hardly known

in this country, even by name. On the contrary, all ranks seem to have a passion for inequality. The hopes of every person are directed to rising in the world, not to pulling the world down to him. The greatest enemy of the political conduct of the House of Lords submits to their superiority of rank as he would to the ordinances of nature, and often thinks any amount of toil and watching repaid by a nod of recognition from one of their number.

We have put the case as strongly as it could be put by an adversary ; and have stated as facts some things, which, if they have been facts, are giving visible signs that they will not always be so. If we look back even twenty years, we shall find that the popular respect for the higher classes is by no means the thing it was : and, though all who are rising wish for the continuance of advantages which they themselves hope to share, there are, among those who do not expect to rise, increasing indications that a levelling spirit is abroad ; and political discontents, in whatever manner originating, show an increasing tendency to take that shape. But it is the less necessary to dwell upon these things, as we shall be satisfied with making out, in respect to the tendency to equality in England, much less than M. de Tocqueville contends for. We do not maintain, that the time is drawing near when there will be no distinction of classes : but we do contend, that the power of the higher classes, both in government and in society, is diminishing ; while that of the middle and even the lower classes is increasing, and likely to increase.

The constituent elements of political importance are property, intelligence, and the power of combination.

In every one of these elements, is it the higher classes, or the other portion of society, that have lately made, and are continuing to make, the most rapid advances?

Even with regard to the element of property, there cannot be room for more than a momentary doubt. The class who are rich by inheritance are so far from augmenting their fortunes, that it is much if they can be said to keep them up. A territorial aristocracy always live up to their means, — generally beyond them. Our own is no exception to the rule; and as their control over the taxes becomes every day more restricted, and the liberal professions more over-crowded, they are condemned more and more to bear the burden of their own large families; which it is not easy to do, compatibly with leaving to the heir the means of keeping up, without becoming embarrassed, the old family establishments. It is matter of notoriety how severely the difficulty of providing for younger sons is felt, even in the highest rank; and that, as a provision for daughters, alliances are now courted which would not have been endured a generation ago. The additions to the "money-power" of the higher ranks consist of the riches of the *novi homines*, who are continually aggregated to that class from among the merchants and manufacturers, and occasionally from the professions. But many of these are merely successors to the impoverished owners of the land they buy; and the fortunes of others are taken, in the way of marriage, to pay off the mortgages of older families. Even with these allowances, no doubt the number of wealthy persons is steadily on the increase; but what is this to the accumulation of capitals, and growth of incomes, in the



hands of the middle class? It is that class which furnishes all the accessions to the aristocracy of wealth; and, for one who makes a large fortune, fifty acquire, without exceeding, a moderate competency, and leave their children to work, like themselves, at the laboring oar.

In point of intelligence, it can still less be affirmed that the higher classes maintain the same proportional ascendancy as of old. They have shared with the rest of the world in the diffusion of information. They have improved, like all other classes, in the decorous virtues. Their humane feelings and refined tastes form, in general, a striking contrast to the coarse habits of the same class a few generations ago. But it would be difficult to point out what new idea in speculation, what invention or discovery in the practical arts, what useful institution, or what permanently valuable book, Great Britain has owed, for the last hundred years, to her hereditary aristocracy, titled or untitled; \* what great public enterprise, what important national movement in religion or politics, those classes have originated, or have so much as taken in it the principal share. Considered in respect to active energies and laborious habits, to the stirring qualities which fit men for playing a considerable part in the affairs of mankind, few will say that our aristocracy have not deteriorated. It is, on the other hand, one of the commonplaces of the age, that knowledge and intelligence are spreading, in a degree which was formerly thought impossible, to the

\* The chief exceptions, since the accession of the house of Hanover, are the chemist Cavendish in the last century, and the Earl of Rosse in the present.

lower, and down even to the lowest rank. And this is a fact, not accomplished, but in the mere dawn of its accomplishment, and which has shown hitherto but a slight promise of its future fruits. It is easy to scoff at the kind of intelligence which is thus diffusing itself; but it is intelligence still. The knowledge which is power is not the highest description of knowledge only: any knowledge which gives the habit of forming an opinion, and the capacity of expressing that opinion, constitutes a political power; and, if combined with the capacity and habit of acting in concert, a formidable one.

It is in this last element, the power of combined action, that the progress of the Democracy has been the most gigantic. What combination can do has been shown by an experiment, of now many years' duration, among a people the most backward in civilization (thanks to English misgovernment), between the Vistula and the Pyrenees. Even on this side of the Irish Channel we have seen something of what could be done by political unions, antislavery societies, and the like; to say nothing of the less advanced, but already powerful, organization of the working classes, the progress of which has been suspended only by the temporary failure arising from the manifest impracticability of its present objects. And these various associations are not the machinery of democratic combination, but the occasional weapons which that spirit forges as it needs them. The real political unions of England are the newspapers. It is these which tell every person what all other persons are feeling, and in what manner they are ready to act: it is by these that the people learn, it may truly be said, their own wishes, and through these

that they declare them. The newspapers and the railroads are solving the problem of bringing the Democracy of England to vote, like that of Athens, simultaneously in one *agora*; and the same agencies are rapidly effacing those local distinctions which rendered one part of our population strangers to another, and are making us more than ever (what is the first condition of a powerful public opinion) a homogeneous people. If America has been said to prove, that, in an extensive country, a popular government may exist, England seems destined to afford the proof, that, after a certain stage in civilization, it must: for as soon as the numerically stronger have the same advantages, in means of combination and celerity of movement, as the smaller number, they are the masters; and, except by their permission, no government can any longer exist.

It may be said, doubtless, that, though the aristocratic class may be no longer in the ascendant, the power by which it is succeeded is not that of the numerical majority; that the middle class in this country is as little in danger of being outstripped by the democracy below, as of being kept down by the aristocracy above; and that there can be no difficulty for that class, aided as it would be by the rich, in making head, by its property, intelligence, and power of combination, against any possible growth of those elements of importance in the inferior classes, and in excluding the mass of mere manual laborers from any share in political rights, unless such a restricted and subordinate one as may be found compatible with the complete ascendancy of property.

We are disposed partially to agree in this opinion.

Universal suffrage is never likely to exist and maintain itself where the majority are *prolétaires*; and we are not unwilling to believe that a laboring class in abject poverty, like a great part of our rural population, or which expends its surplus earnings in gin or in waste, like so much of the better-paid population of the towns, may be kept politically in subjection, and that the middle classes are safe from the permanent rule of such a body, though perhaps not from its Swing outrages or Wat Tyler insurrections. But this admission leaves the fact of a tendency towards Democracy practically untouched. There is a Democracy short of pauper suffrage: the working classes themselves contain a middle as well as a lowest class. Not to meddle with the *vexata questio*, whether the lowest class is or is not improving in condition, it is certain that a larger and larger body of manual laborers are rising above that class, and acquiring at once decent wages and decent habits of conduct. A rapidly increasing multitude of our working people are becoming, in point of condition and habits, what the American working people are; and, if our boasted improvements are of any worth, there must be a growing tendency in society and government to make this condition of the laboring classes the general one. The nation must be most slenderly supplied with wisdom and virtue, if it cannot do something to improve its own physical condition, to say nothing of its moral. It is something gained, that well-meaning persons of all parties now at length profess to have this end in view. But in proportion as it is approached to; in proportion as the working class becomes, what all proclaim their desire that it should

be, well paid, well taught, and well conducted, — in the same proportion will the opinions of that class tell, according to its numbers, upon the affairs of the country. Whatever portion of the class succeeds in thus raising itself becomes a part of the ruling body; and, if the suffrage be necessary to make it so, it will not be long without the suffrage.

Meanwhile, we are satisfied if it be admitted that the government of England is progressively changing from the government of a few, to the government, not indeed of *the* many, but of many, — from an aristocracy with a popular infusion, to the *régime* of the middle class. To most purposes, in the constitution of modern society, the government of a numerous middle class is Democracy. Nay, it not merely *is* Democracy, but the only Democracy of which there is yet any example: what is called universal suffrage in America arising from the fact, that America is *all* middle class; the whole people being in a condition, both as to education and pecuniary means, corresponding to the middle class here. The consequences which we would deduce from this fact will appear presently, when we examine M. de Tocqueville's view of the moral, social, and intellectual influences of Democracy. This cannot be done until we have briefly stated his opinions on the purely political branch of the question. To this part of our task we shall now proceed, with as much conciseness as is permitted by the number and importance of the ideas, which, holding an essential place among the grounds of his general conclusions, have a claim not to be omitted even from the most rapid summary.

We have already intimated, that M. de Tocqueville recognizes such a thing as a democratic state of society without a democratic government, — a state in which the people are all equal, and subjected to one common master, who selects indiscriminately from all of them the instruments of his government. In this sense, as he remarks, the government of the Pacha of Egypt is a specimen of Democracy; and to this type (with allowance for difference of civilization and manners) he thinks that all nations are in danger of approximating, in which the equalization of conditions has made greater progress than the spirit of liberty. Now, this he holds to be the condition of France. The kings of France have always been the greatest of levellers: Louis XI., Richelieu, Louis XIV., alike labored to break the power of the noblesse, and reduce all intermediate classes and bodies to the general level. After them came the Revolution, bringing with it the abolition of hereditary privileges, the emigration and dispossession of half the great landed proprietors, and the subdivision of large fortunes by the revolutionary law of inheritance. While the equalization of conditions was thus rapidly reaching its extreme limits, no corresponding progress of public spirit was taking place in the people at large. No institutions capable of fostering an interest in the details of public affairs were created by the Revolution: it swept away even those which despotism had spared; and, if it admitted a portion of the population to a voice in the government, gave it them only on the greatest but rarest occasion, — the election of the great council of the State. A political act, to be done only once in a few years, and for which nothing in the

daily habits of the citizen has prepared him, leaves his intellect and moral dispositions very much as it found them; and, the citizens not being encouraged to take upon themselves collectively that portion of the business of society which had been performed by the privileged classes, the central government easily drew to itself, not only the whole local administration, but much of what, in countries like ours, is performed by associations of individuals. Whether the government was revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, made no difference: under the one and the other, every thing was done *for* the people, and nothing *by* the people. In France, consequently, the arbitrary power of the magistrate in detail is almost without limit. And when, of late, some attempts have been made to associate a portion of the citizens in the management of local affairs, comparatively few have been found, even among those in good circumstances (anywhere but in the large towns), who could be induced willingly to take any part in that management; who, when they had no personal object to gain, felt the public interest sufficiently their own interest not to grudge every moment which they withdrew from their occupations or pleasures to bestow upon it. With all the eagerness and violence of party contests in France, a nation more passive in the hands of any one who is uppermost does not exist. M. de Tocqueville has no faith in the virtues, nor even in the prolonged existence, of a superficial love of freedom, in the face of a practical habit of slavery; and the question, whether the French are to be a free people, depends, in his opinion, upon the possibility of creating a spirit and a habit of local self-government.

M. de Tocqueville sees the principal source and security of American freedom, not so much in the election of the President and Congress by popular suffrage, as in the administration of nearly all the business of society by the people themselves. This it is, which, according to him, keeps up the habit of attending to the public interest, not in the gross merely, or on a few momentous occasions, but in its dry and troublesome details. This, too, it is which enlightens the people; which teaches them by experience how public affairs must be carried on. The dissemination of public business as widely as possible among the people, is, in his opinion, the only means by which they can be fitted for the exercise of any share of power over the legislature, and generally also the only means by which they can be led to desire it.

For the particulars of this education of the American people by means of political institutions, we must refer to the work itself; of which it is one of the minor recommendations, that it has never been equalled even as a mere statement and explanation of the institutions of the United States. The general principle to which M. de Tocqueville has given the sanction of his authority merits more consideration than it has yet received from the professed laborers in the cause of national education. It has often been said, and requires to be repeated still oftener, that books and discourses alone are not education; that life is a problem, not a theorem; that action can only be learnt in action. A child learns to write its name only by a succession of trials; and is a man to be taught to use his mind and guide his conduct by mere precept? What can be learnt in



schools is important, but not all-important. The main branch of the education of human beings is their habitual employment; which must be either their individual vocation, or some matter of general concern, in which they are called to take a part. The private money-getting occupation of almost every one is more or less a mechanical routine: it brings but few of his faculties into action, while its exclusive pursuit tends to fasten his attention and interest exclusively upon himself, and upon his family as an appendage of himself; making him indifferent to the public, to the more generous objects and the nobler interests, and, in his inordinate regard for his personal comforts, selfish and cowardly. Balance these tendencies by contrary ones; give him something to do for the public, whether as a vestryman, a juryman, or an elector, — and, in that degree, his ideas and feelings are taken out of this narrow circle. He becomes acquainted with more varied business, and a larger range of considerations. He is made to feel, that, besides the interests which separate him from his fellow-citizens, he has interests which connect him with them; that not only the common weal is his weal, but that it partly depends upon his exertions. Whatever might be the case in some other constitutions of society, the spirit of a commercial people will be, we are persuaded, essentially mean and slavish, wherever public spirit is not cultivated by an extensive participation of the people in the business of government in detail; nor will the desideratum of a general diffusion of intelligence among either the middle or lower classes be realized but by a corresponding dissemination of public functions, and a voice in public affairs.

Nor is this inconsistent with obtaining a considerable share of the benefits (and they are great) of what is called centralization. The principle of local self-government has been undeservedly discredited by being associated with the agitation against the new poor-law. The most active agency of a central authority in collecting and communicating information, giving advice to the local bodies, and even framing general rules for their observance, is no hinderance, but an aid, to making the local liberties an instrument of educating the people. The existence of such a central agency allows of intrusting to the people themselves, or to local bodies representative of them, many things of too great national importance to be committed unreservedly to the localities; and completes the efficacy of local self-government as a means of instruction, by accustoming the people not only to judge of particular facts, but to understand and apply, and feel practically the value of, principles. The mode of administration provided for the English poor-laws by the late act seems to us to be, in its general conception, almost theoretically perfect; and the extension of a similar mixture of central and local management to several other branches of administration, thereby combining the best fruits of popular intervention with much of the advantage of skilled supervision and traditional experience, would, we believe, be entitled to no mean rank in M. de Tocqueville's list of correctives to the inconveniences of Democracy.

In estimating the effects of democratic government as distinguished from a democratic condition of society, M. de Tocqueville assumes the state of circumstances

which exists in America, — a popular government in the State, combined with popular local institutions. In such a government he sees great advantages, balanced by no inconsiderable evils.

Among the advantages, one which figures in the foremost rank is that of which we have just spoken, — the diffusion of intelligence; the remarkable impulse given by democratic institutions to the active faculties of that portion of the community who in other circumstances are the most ignorant, passive, and apathetic. These are characteristics of America which strike all travellers. Activity, enterprise, and a respectable amount of information, are not the qualities of a few among the American citizens, nor even of many, but of all. There is no class of persons who are the slaves of habit and routine. Every American will carry on his manufacture, or cultivate his farm, by the newest and best methods applicable to the circumstances of the case. The poorest American understands and can explain the most intricate parts of his country's institutions; can discuss her interests, internal and foreign. Much of this may justly be attributed to the universality of easy circumstances, and to the education and habits which the first settlers in America brought with them; but our author is certainly not wrong in ascribing a certain portion of it to the perpetual exercise of the faculties of every man among the people, through the universal practice of submitting all public questions to his judgment.

“It is incontestable that the people frequently conduct public business very ill; but it is impossible that the people should take a part in public business without extending the

circle of their ideas, and without quitting the ordinary routine of their mental occupations. The humblest individual who is called upon to co-operate in the government of society acquires a certain degree of self-respect; and, as he possesses power, minds more enlightened than his own offer him their services. He is canvassed by a multitude of claimants who need his support; and who, seeking to deceive him in a thousand different ways, instruct him during the process. He takes a part in political undertakings which did not originate in his own conception, but which give him a general taste for such undertakings. New ameliorations are daily suggested to him in the property which he holds in common with others; and this gives him the desire of improving that property which is peculiarly his own. He is, perhaps, neither happier nor better than those who came before him; but he is better informed, and more active. I have no doubt that the democratic institutions of the United States, joined to the physical constitution of the country, are the cause (not the direct, as is so often asserted, but the indirect cause) of the prodigious commercial activity of the inhabitants. It is not engendered by the laws; but it proceeds from habits acquired through participation in making the laws.

“When the opponents of Democracy assert that a single individual performs the functions which he undertakes better than the government of the people at large, it appears to me that they are perfectly right. The government of an individual, supposing an equal degree of instruction on either side, has more constancy, more perseverance, than that of a multitude; more combination in its plans, and more perfection in its details; and is better qualified judiciously to discriminate the characters of the men it employs. If any deny this, they have never seen a democratic government, or have formed their opinion only upon a few instances. It must be conceded, that, even when local circumstances and the disposition of the people allow democratic institutions to subsist, they never dis-

play a regular and methodical system of government. Democratic liberty is far from accomplishing all the projects it undertakes with the skill of an intelligent despotism. It frequently abandons them before they have borne their fruits, or risks them when the consequences may prove dangerous; but, in the end, it produces greater results than any absolute government. It does fewer things well; but it does a greater number of things. Not what is done by a democratic government, but what is done under a democratic government by private agency, is really great. Democracy does not confer the most skilful kind of government upon the people; but it produces that which the most skilful governments are frequently unable to awaken,—namely, an all-pervading and restless activity; a superabundant force; an energy which is never seen elsewhere, and which may, under favorable circumstances, beget the most amazing benefits. These are the true advantages of Democracy.”—Vol. ii. chap. 6.

The other great political advantage which our author ascribes to Democracy requires less illustration, because it is more obvious, and has been oftener treated of,—that the course of legislation and administration tends always in the direction of the interest of the greatest number. Although M. de Tocqueville is far from considering this quality of Democracy as the panacea in politics which it has sometimes been supposed to be, he expresses his sense of its importance, if in measured, in no undecided terms. America does not exhibit to us what we see in the best mixed constitutions,—the class-interests of small minorities wielding the powers of legislation, in opposition both to the general interest and to the general opinion of the community: still less does she exhibit what has been characteristic of most representative governments, and is only gradually ceas-

ing to characterize our own, — a standing league of class-interests; a tacit compact, among the various knots of men who profit by abuses, to stand by one another in resisting reform. Nothing can subsist in America that is not recommended by arguments, which, in appearance at least, address themselves to the interest of the many. However frequently, therefore, that interest may be mistaken, the direction of legislation towards it is maintained in the midst of the mistakes; and if a community is so situated or so ordered that it can “support the transitory action of bad laws, and can await without destruction the result of the *general tendency* of the laws,” that country, in the opinion of M. de Tocqueville, will prosper more under a democratic government than under any other. But, in aristocratic governments, the interest, or at best the honor and glory, of the ruling class, is considered as the public interest; and all that is most valuable to the individuals composing the subordinate classes is apt to be immolated to that public interest with all the rigor of antique patriotism.

“The men who are intrusted with the direction of public affairs in the United States are frequently inferior, both in point of capacity and of morality, to those whom aristocratic institutions would raise to power; but their interest is identified and confounded with that of the majority of their fellow-citizens. They may frequently be faithless, and frequently mistaken: but they will never systematically adopt a line of conduct hostile to the majority; and it is impossible that they should give a dangerous or an exclusive character to the government.

“The mal-administration of a democratic magistrate is,

moreover, a mere isolated fact, the effects of which do not last beyond the short period for which he is elected. Corruption and incapacity do not act as common interests which connect men permanently with one another. A corrupt or an incapable magistrate will not concert his measures with another magistrate, simply because that individual is corrupt and incapable like himself; and these two men will never unite their endeavors to promote or screen the corruption or inaptitude of their remote posterity. The ambition and the manœuvres of the one will serve, on the contrary, to unmask the other. The vices of the magistrate in democratic States are usually those of his individual character.

“But, under aristocratic governments, public men are swayed by the interest of their order, which, if it is sometimes blended with the interests of the majority, is frequently distinct from them. This interest is a common and lasting bond which unites them together. It induces them to coalesce, and combine their efforts towards attaining an end which is not always the happiness of the greatest number: and it not only connects the persons in authority with each other, but links them also to a considerable portion of the governed; since a numerous body of citizens belongs to the aristocracy, without being invested with official functions. The aristocratic magistrate, therefore, finds himself supported in his own natural tendencies by a portion of society itself, as well as by the government of which he is a member.

“The common object which connects the interest of the magistrates in aristocracies with that of a portion of their cotemporaries identifies it also with future generations of their order. They labor for ages to come, as well as for their own time. The aristocratic magistrate is thus urged towards the same point by the passions of those who surround him, by his own, and, I might almost say, by those of his posterity. Is it wonderful that he should not resist? And hence it is that the class-spirit often hurries along with it those whom it does

not corrupt, and makes them unintentionally fashion society to their own particular ends, and pre-fashion it for their descendants." — *Ibid.*

These, then, are the advantages ascribed by our author to a democratic government. We are now to speak of its disadvantages.

According to the opinion which is prevalent among the more cultivated advocates of Democracy, one of its greatest recommendations is, that, by means of it, the wisest and worthiest are brought to the head of affairs. The people, it is said, have the strongest interest in selecting the right men. It is presumed that they will be sensible of that interest; and, subject to more or less liability of error, will, in the main, succeed in placing a high, if not the highest, degree of worth and talent in the highest situations.

M. de Tocqueville is of another opinion. He was forcibly struck with the general want of merit in the members of the American legislatures and other public functionaries. He accounts for this, not solely by the people's incapacity to discriminate merit, but partly also by their indifference to it. He thinks there is little preference for men of superior intellect; little desire to obtain their services for the public; occasionally even a jealousy of them, especially if they be also rich. They, on their part, have still less inclination to seek any such employment. Public offices are little lucrative, confer little power, and offer no guarantee of permanency. Almost any other career holds out better pecuniary prospects to a man of ability and enterprise; nor will instructed men stoop to those mean arts, and those compromises of their private opinions, to which



their less distinguished competitors willingly resort. The depositaries of power, after being chosen with little regard to merit, are, partly perhaps for that very reason, frequently changed. The rapid return of elections, and even a taste for variety, M. de Tocqueville thinks, on the part of electors (a taste not unnatural wherever little regard is paid to qualifications), produces a rapid succession of new men in the legislature and in all public posts. Hence, on the one hand, great instability in the laws, — every new-comer desiring to do something in the short time he has before him: while, on the other hand, there is no political *carrière*; statesmanship is not a profession. There is no body of persons educated for public business, pursuing it as their occupation, and who transmit from one to another the results of their experience. There are no traditions, no science or art of public affairs. A functionary knows little, and cares less, about the principles on which his predecessor has acted; and his successor thinks as little about his. Public transactions are therefore conducted with a reasonable share, indeed, of the common sense and common information which are general in a democratic community, but with little benefit from specific study and experience; without consistent system, long-sighted views, or persevering pursuit of distant objects.

This is likely enough to be a true picture of the American Government, but can scarcely be said to be peculiar to it. There are now few governments remaining, whether representative or absolute, of which something of the same sort might not be said. In no country where the real government resides in the minister, and where there are frequent changes of ministry,

are far-sighted views of policy likely to be acted upon; whether the country be England or France, in the eighteenth century or in the nineteenth.\* Crude and ill-considered legislation is the character of all governments whose laws are made, and acts of administration performed, *impromptu*; — not in pursuance of a general design, but from the pressure of some present occasion; of all governments in which the ruling power is to any great extent exercised by persons not trained to government as a business. It is true, that the governments which have been celebrated for their profound policy have generally been aristocracies: but they have been very narrow aristocracies; consisting of so few members, that every member could personally participate in the business of administration. These are the governments which have a natural tendency to be administered steadily; that is, according to fixed principles. Every member of the governing body being trained to government as a profession, like other professions they respect precedent, transmit their experience from generation to generation, acquire and preserve a set of traditions; and, all being competent judges of each other's merits, the ablest easily rises to his proper level. The governments of ancient Rome and modern Venice were of this character; and, as all know, for ages conducted the affairs of those States with admirable constancy and skill, on fixed principles, — often unworthy enough, but always eminently adapted to the ends of those governments. When the governing body, whether it consists of the many or of a privileged class, is so numerous, that the large majority of it do not and cannot make

\* A few sentences are here inserted from another paper by the author.

the practice of government the main occupation of their lives, it is impossible that there should be wisdom, foresight, and caution in the governing body itself. These qualities must be found, if found at all, not in the body, but in those whom the body trust. The opinion of a numerous ruling class is as fluctuating, as liable to be wholly given up to immediate impulses, as the opinion of the people. Witness the whole course of English history. All our laws have been made on temporary impulses. In no country has the course of legislation been less directed to any steady and consistent purpose.

In so far as it is true that there is a deficiency of remarkable merit in American public men (and our author allows that there is a large number of exceptions), the fact may perhaps admit of a less discreditable explanation. America needs very little government. She has no wars; no neighbors; no complicated international relations; no old society with its thousand abuses to reform; no half-fed and untaught millions in want of food and guidance. Society in America requires little but to be let alone. The current affairs which her government has to transact can seldom demand much more than average capacity; and it may be in the Americans a wise economy, not to pay the price of great talents when common ones will serve their purpose. We make these remarks by way of caution, not of controversy. Like many other parts of our author's doctrines, that of which we are now speaking affords work for a succession of thinkers and of accurate observers; and must, in the main, depend on future experience to confirm or refute it.

We now come to that one among the dangers of Democracy respecting which so much has been said, and which our author designates as "the despotism of the majority."

It is perhaps the greatest defect of M. de Tocqueville's book, that, from the scarcity of examples, his propositions, even when derived from observation, have the air of mere abstract speculations. He speaks of the tyranny of the majority, in general phrases; but gives hardly any instances of it, nor much information as to the mode in which it is practically exemplified. The omission was in the present instance the more excusable, as the despotism complained of was at that time, politically at least, an evil in apprehension more than in sufferance; and he was uneasy rather at the total absence of security against the tyranny of the majority, than at the frequency of its actual exertion.

Events, however, which have occurred since the publication of the first part of M. de Tocqueville's work, give indication of the shape which tyranny is most likely to assume when exercised by a majority.

It is not easy to surmise any inducements of interest, by which, in a country like America, the greater number could be led to oppress the smaller. When the majority and the minority are spoken of as conflicting interests, the rich and the poor are generally meant; but where the rich are content with being rich, and do not claim as such any political privileges, their interest and that of the poor are generally the same: complete protection to property, and freedom in the disposal of it, are alike important to both. When, indeed, the

poor are so poor that they can scarcely be worse off, respect on their part for rights of property which they cannot hope to share is never safely to be calculated upon. But where all have property, either in enjoyment or in reasonable hope, and an appreciable chance of acquiring a large fortune; and where every man's way of life proceeds on the confident assurance, that, by superior exertion, he will obtain a superior reward, — the importance of inviolability of property is not likely to be lost sight of. It is not affirmed of the Americans, that they make laws against the rich, or unduly press upon them in the imposition of taxes. If a laboring class, less happily circumstanced, could prematurely force themselves into influence over our own legislature, there might then be danger, not so much of violations of property, as of undue interference with contracts; unenlightened legislation for the supposed interest of the many; laws founded on mistakes in political economy. A minimum of wages, or a tax on machinery, might be attempted: as silly and as inefficacious attempts might be made to keep up wages by law as were so long made by the British Legislature to keep them down by the same means. We have no wish to see the experiment tried: but we are fully convinced that experience would correct the one error as it has corrected the other, and in the same way; namely, by complete practical failure.

It is not from the separate interests, real or imaginary, of the majority, that minorities are in danger, but from its antipathies of religion, political party, or race; and experience in America seems to confirm, what theory rendered probable, that the tyranny of the

majority would not take the shape of tyrannical laws, but that of a dispensing power over all laws. The people of Massachusetts passed no law prohibiting Roman-Catholic schools, or exempting Protestants from the penalties of incendiarism: they contented themselves with burning the Ursuline convent to the ground, aware that no jury would be found to redress the injury. In the same reliance, the people of New York and Philadelphia sacked and destroyed the houses of the Abolitionists, and the schools and churches of their black fellow-citizens; while numbers who took no share in the outrage amused themselves with the sight. The laws of Maryland still prohibit murder and burglary; but, in 1812, a Baltimore mob, after destroying the printing-office of a newspaper which had opposed the war with England, broke into the prison to which the editors had been conveyed for safety, murdered one of them, left the others for dead; and the criminals were tried and acquitted. In the same city, in 1835, a riot which lasted four days, and the foolish history of which is related in M. Chevalier's Letters, was occasioned by the fraudulent bankruptcy of the Maryland Bank. It is not so much the riots, in such instances, that are deplorable; these might have occurred in any country: it is the impossibility of obtaining aid from an executive dependent on the mob, or justice from juries which formed part of it; it is the apathetic cowardly truckling of disapproving lookers-on; almost a parallel to the passive imbecility of the people of Paris, when a handful of hired assassins perpetrated the massacres of September. For where the majority is the sole power, and a power issuing its mandates in the form of

riots, it inspires a terror which the most arbitrary monarch often fails to excite. The silent sympathy of the majority may support on the scaffold the martyr of one man's tyranny; but, if we would imagine the situation of a victim of the majority itself, we must look to the annals of religious persecution for a parallel.

Yet neither ought we to forget, that even this lawless violence is not so great, because not so lasting, an evil, as tyranny through the medium of the law. A tyrannical law remains; because, so long as it is submitted to, its existence does not weaken the general authority of the laws. But, in America, tyranny will seldom use the instrument of law, because there is, in general, no permanent class to be tyrannized over. The subjects of oppression are casual objects of popular resentment, who cannot be reached by law, but only by occasional acts of lawless power; and to tolerate these, if they ever became frequent, would be consenting to live without law. Already, in the United States, the spirit of outrage has raised a spirit of resistance to outrage; of moral resistance first, as was to be wished and expected: if that fail, physical resistance will follow. The majority, like other despotic powers, will be taught, by experience, that it cannot enjoy both the advantages of civilized society, and the barbarian liberty of taking men's lives and property at its discretion. Let it once be generally understood that minorities will fight, and majorities will be shy of provoking them. The bad government of which there is any permanent danger under modern civilization is in the form of bad laws and bad tribunals: government by the *sic volo*, either of a king or a mob, belongs to past ages, and can no

more exist, for long together, out of the pale of Asiatic barbarism.

The despotism, therefore, of the majority within the limits of civil life, though a real evil, does not appear to us to be a formidable one. The tyranny which we fear, and which M. de Tocqueville principally dreads, is of another kind, — a tyranny not over the body, but over the mind.

It is the complaint of M. de Tocqueville, as well as of other travellers in America, that in no country does there exist less independence of thought. In religion, indeed, the varieties of opinion which fortunately prevailed among those by whom the colonies were settled have produced a toleration in law and in fact extending to the limits of Christianity. If by ill fortune there had happened to be a religion of the majority, the case would probably have been different. On every other subject, when the opinion of the majority is made up, hardly any one, it is affirmed, dares to be of any other opinion, or at least to profess it. The statements are not clear as to the nature or amount of the inconvenience that would be suffered by any one who presumed to question a received opinion. It seems certain, however, that scarcely any person has that courage; that, when public opinion considers a question as settled, no further discussion of it takes place; and that not only nobody dares (what everybody may venture upon in Europe) to say any thing disrespectful to the public, or derogatory to its opinions, but that its wisdom and virtue are perpetually celebrated with the most servile adulation and sycophancy.

These considerations, which were much dwelt on in



the author's First Part, are intimately connected with the views promulgated in his Second, respecting the influence of Democracy on intellect.

The Americans, according to M. de Tocqueville, not only profess, but carry into practice, on all subjects except the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and Christian ethics, the habit of mind which has been so often inculcated as the one sufficient security against mental slavery, — the rejection of authority, and the assertion of the right of private judgment. They regard the traditions of the past merely in the light of materials, and as "a 'useful study for doing otherwise and better.'" They are not accustomed to look for guidance either to the wisdom of ancestors, or to eminent cotemporary wisdom, but require that the grounds on which they act shall be made level to their own comprehension. And, as is natural to those who govern themselves by common sense rather than by science, their cast of mind is altogether unpedantic and practical: they go straight to the end, without favor or prejudice towards any set of means; and aim at the substance of things, with something like a contempt for form.

From such habits and ways of thinking, the consequence which would be apprehended by some would be a most licentious abuse of individual independence of thought. The fact is the reverse. It is impossible, as our author truly remarks, that mankind in general should form all their opinions for themselves: an authority from which they mostly derive them may be rejected in theory; but it always exists in fact. That law above them, which older societies have found in the traditions

of antiquity, or in the dogmas of priests or philosophers, the Americans find in the opinions of one another. All being nearly equal in circumstances, and all nearly alike in intelligence and knowledge, the only authority which commands an involuntary deference is that of numbers. The more perfectly each knows himself the equal of every single individual, the more insignificant and helpless he feels against the aggregate mass, and the more incredible it appears to him that the opinion of all the world can possibly be erroneous. "Faith in public opinion," says M. de Tocqueville, "becomes in such countries a species of religion, and the majority its prophet." The idea that the things which the multitude believe are still disputable is no longer kept alive by dissentient voices; the right of private judgment, by being extended to the incompetent, ceases to be exercised even by the competent; and speculation becomes possible only within the limits traced, not, as of old, by the infallibility of Aristotle, but by that of "our free and enlightened citizens," or "our free and enlightened age."

On the influence of Democracy upon the cultivation of science and art, the opinions of M. de Tocqueville are highly worthy of attention. There are many, who, partly from theoretic considerations, and partly from the marked absence in America of original efforts in literature, philosophy, or the fine arts, incline to believe that modern Democracy is fatal to them; and that, wherever its spirit spreads, they will take flight. M. de Tocqueville is not of this opinion. The example of America, as he observes, is not to the purpose; because America is, intellectually speaking, a province of Eng-

land, — a province in which the great occupation of the inhabitants is making money, because for that they have peculiar facilities; and are therefore, like the people of Manchester or Birmingham, for the most part contented to receive the higher branches of knowledge ready-made from the capital. In a democratic nation, which is also free, and generally educated, our author is far from thinking that there will be no public to relish or remunerate the works of science and genius. Although there will be great shifting of fortunes, and no hereditary body of wealthy persons sufficient to form a class, there will be, he thinks, from the general activity, and the absence of artificial barriers, combined with the inequality of human intelligence, a far greater number of rich individuals (*infiniment plus nombreux*) than in an aristocratic society. There will be, therefore, though not so complete a leisure, yet a leisure extending perhaps to more persons; while, from the closer contact and greater mutual intercourse between classes, the love of intellectual pleasures and occupations will spread downward very widely among those who have not the same advantages of leisure. Moreover, talents and knowledge being in a democratic society the only means of rapid improvement in fortune, they will be, in the abstract at least, by no means undervalued: whatever measure of them any person is capable of appreciating, he will also be desirous of possessing. Instead, therefore, of any neglect of science and literature, the eager ambition which is universal in such a state of society takes that direction as well as others; and the number of those who cultivate these pursuits becomes "immense."

It is from this fact—from the more active competition in the products of intellect, and the more numerous public to which they are addressed—that M. de Tocqueville deduces the defects with which the products themselves will be chargeable. In the multiplication of their quantity he sees the deterioration of their quality. Distracted by so great a multitude, the public can bestow but a moment's attention on each: they will be adapted, therefore, chiefly for striking at the moment. Deliberate approval, and a duration beyond the hour, become more and more difficult of attainment. What is written for the judgment of a highly instructed few, amidst the abundance of writings may very probably never reach them; and their suffrage, which never gave riches, does not now confer even glory. But the multitude of buyers affords the possibility of great pecuniary success and momentary notoriety for the work which is made up to please at once, and to please the many. Literature thus becomes not only a trade, but is carried on by the maxims usually adopted by other trades which live by the number, rather than by the quality, of their customers; that much pains need not be bestowed on commodities intended for the general market, and that what is saved in the workmanship may be more profitably expended in self-advertisement. There will thus be an immense mass of third- and fourth-rate productions, and very few first-rate. Even the turmoil and bustle of a society in which every one is striving to get on, is in itself, our author observes, not favorable to meditation. “Il règne dans le sein de ces nations un petit mouvement incommode, une sorte de roulement incessant des hommes les uns sur les autres, qui trouble

et distrait l'esprit sans l'animer et l'élever." Not to mention that the universal tendency to action, and to rapid action, directs the taste to applications rather than principles, and hasty approximations to truth rather than scientific accuracy in it.

Passing now from the province of intellect to that of sentiments and morals, M. de Tocqueville is of opinion, that the general softening of manners, and the remarkable growth, in modern times, of humanity and philanthropy, are in great part the effect of the gradual progress of social equality. Where the different classes of mankind are divided by impassable barriers, each may have intense sympathies with his own class,—more intense than it is almost possible to have with mankind in general: but those who are far below him in condition are so unlike himself, that he hardly considers them as human beings; and, if they are refractory and troublesome, will be unable to feel for them even that kindly interest which he experiences for his more unresisting domestic cattle. Our author cites a well-known passage of Madame de Sévigné's Letters in exemplification of the want of feeling exhibited even by good sort of persons towards those with whom they have no *fellow-feeling*. In America, except towards the slaves (an exception which proves the rule), he finds the sentiments of philanthropy and compassion almost universal, accompanied by a general kindness of manner, and obligingness of disposition, without much of ceremony and punctilio. As all feel that they are not above the possible need of the good-will and good offices of others, every one is ready to afford his own. The general equality penetrates also into the family

relations. There is more intimacy, he thinks, than in Europe, between parents and children ; but less, except in the earliest years, of paternal authority, and the filial respect which is founded on it. These, however, are among the topics which we must omit, as well as the connection which our author attempts to trace between equality of conditions and strictness of domestic morals, and some other remarks on domestic society in America, which do not appear to us to be of any considerable value.

M. de Tocqueville is of opinion, that one of the tendencies of a democratic state of society is to make every one, in a manner, retire within himself, and concentrate his interests, wishes, and pursuits within his own business and household.

The members of a democratic community are like the sands of the sea-shore, each very minute, and no one adhering to any other. There are no permanent classes, and therefore no *esprit de corps*; few hereditary fortunes, and therefore few local attachments, or outward objects consecrated by family feeling. A man feels little connection with his neighbors, little with his ancestors, little with his posterity. There are scarcely any ties to connect any two men together, except the common one of country. Now, the love of country is not, in large communities, a passion of spontaneous growth. When a man's country is his town, where his ancestors have lived for generations, of which he knows every inhabitant, and has recollections associated with every street and building ; in which alone, of all places on the earth, he is not a stranger ; which he is perpetually called upon to defend in the field, and in whose

glory or shame he has an appreciable share, made sensible by the constant presence and rivalry of foreigners, — in such a state of things, patriotism is easy. It was easy in the ancient republics, or in modern Switzerland. But, in great communities, an intense interest in public affairs is scarcely natural, except to a member of an aristocracy ; who alone has so conspicuous a position, and is so personally identified with the conduct of the government, that his credit and consequence are essentially connected with the glory and power of the nation he belongs to, — its glory and power (observe), not the well-being of the bulk of its inhabitants. It is difficult for an obscure person, like the citizen of a Democracy, who is in no way involved in the responsibility of public affairs, and cannot hope to exercise more than the minutest influence over them, to have the sentiment of patriotism as a living and earnest feeling. There being no intermediate objects for his attachments to fix upon, they fasten themselves on his own private affairs ; and, according to national character and circumstances, it becomes his ruling passion either to improve his condition in life, or to take his ease and pleasure by the means which it already affords him.

As, therefore, the state of society becomes more democratic, it is more and more necessary to nourish patriotism by artificial means ; and, of these, none are so efficacious as free institutions, — a large and frequent intervention of the citizens in the management of public business. Nor does the love of country alone require this encouragement, but every feeling which connects men either by interest or sympathy with their neighbors

and fellow-citizens. Popular institutions are the great means of rendering general in a people, and especially among the richer classes, the desire of being useful in their generation, — useful to the public or to their neighbors, without distinction of rank, — as well as courteous and unassuming in their habitual intercourse.

“When the public is supreme, there is no man who does not feel the value of public good-will, or who does not endeavor to court it by drawing to himself the esteem and affection of those amongst whom he is to live. Many of the passions which congeal and keep asunder human hearts are then obliged to retire, and hide below the surface. Pride must be dissembled; disdain does not break out; selfishness is afraid of itself. Under a free government, as most public offices are elective, the men whose elevated minds or aspiring hopes are too closely circumscribed in private life constantly feel that they cannot do without the population which surrounds them. Men learn at such times to think of their fellow-men from ambitious motives; and they frequently find it, in a manner, their interest to be forgetful of self.

“I may here be met by an objection, derived from electioneering intrigues, — the meannesses of candidates, and the calumnies of their opponents. These are opportunities of animosity which occur oftener, the more frequent elections become. Such evils are doubtless great, but they are transient; whereas the benefits which attend them remain. The desire of being elected may lead some men for a time to mutual hostility; but this same desire leads all men, in the long-run, mutually to support each other; and, if it happens that an election accidently severs two friends, the electoral system brings a multitude of citizens permanently together who would always have remained unknown to each other. Freedom engenders private animosities; but despotism gives birth to general indifference. . . .



“A brilliant achievement may win for you the favor of a people at one stroke; but to earn the love and respect of the population which surrounds you requires a long succession of little services and obscure good offices, a constant habit of kindness, and an established reputation for disinterestedness. Local freedom, then, which leads a great number of citizens to value the affections of their neighbors, and of those with whom they are in contact, perpetually draws men back to one another, in spite of the propensities which sever them; and forces them to render each other mutual assistance.

“In the United States, the more opulent citizens take great care not to stand aloof from the people: on the contrary, they constantly keep on easy terms with them; they listen to them; they speak to them every day. They know that the rich, in democracies, always stand in need of the poor; and that, in democratic times, a poor man's attachment depends more on manner than on benefits conferred. The very magnitude of such benefits, by setting the difference of conditions in a strong light, causes a secret irritation to those who reap advantage from them; but the charm of simplicity of manners is almost irresistible. . . . This truth does not penetrate at once into the minds of the rich. They generally resist it as long as the democratic revolution lasts; and they do not acknowledge it immediately after that revolution is accomplished. They are very ready to do good to the people; but they still choose to keep them at arm's-length. They think that is sufficient; but they are mistaken. They might spend fortunes thus, without warming the hearts of the population around them: that population does not ask them for the sacrifice of their money, but of their pride.

“It would seem as if every imagination in the United States were on the stretch to invent means of increasing the wealth and satisfying the wants of the public. The best informed inhabitants of each district are incessantly using their information to discover new means of augmenting the general

prosperity; and, when they have made any such discoveries, they eagerly surrender them to the mass of the people. . . .

“I have often seen Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare; and I have a hundred times remarked, that, in case of need, they hardly ever fail to lend faithful support to each other. The free institutions which the inhabitants of the United States possess, and the political rights of which they make so much use, remind every citizen, and in a thousand ways, that he is a member of society. They at every instant impress upon his mind the notion, that it is the duty as well as the interest of men to make themselves useful to their fellow-creatures; and as he sees no particular reason for disliking them, since he is never either their master or their slave, his heart readily leans to the side of kindness. Men attend to the interests of the public, first by necessity, afterwards by choice: what was calculation becomes an instinct; and, by dint of working for the good of one's fellow-citizens, the habit and the taste for serving them is at length acquired.

“Many people in France consider equality of conditions as one evil, and political freedom as a second. When they are obliged to yield to the former, they strive at least to escape from the latter. But I contend, that, in order to combat the evils which equality may produce, there is only one effectual remedy; namely, political freedom.” — Vol. iii. part ii. chap. 4.

With regard to the tone of moral sentiment characteristic of Democracy, M. de Tocqueville holds an opinion which we think deserves the attention of moralists. Among a class composed of persons who have been born into a distinguished position, the habitual springs of action will be very different from those of a democratic community. Speaking generally (and making abstraction both of individual peculiarities and of the

influence of moral culture), it may be said of the first, that their feelings and actions will be mainly under the influence of pride; of the latter, under that of interest. Now, as, in an aristocratic society, the elevated class, though small in number, sets the fashion in opinion and feeling; even virtue will, in that state of society, seem to be most strongly recommended by arguments addressing themselves to pride; in a Democracy, by those which address themselves to self-interest. In the one, we hear chiefly of the beauty and dignity of virtue, the grandeur of self-sacrifice; in the other, of honesty the best policy, the value of character, and the common interest of every individual in the good of the whole.

Neither the one nor the other of these modes of feeling, our author is well aware, constitutes moral excellence; which must have a deeper foundation than either the calculations of self-interest, or the emotions of self-flattery. But as an auxiliary to that higher principle, and as far as possible a substitute for it when it is absent, the latter of the two, in his opinion, though the least sentimental, will stand the most wear.

“The principle of enlightened self-interest is not a lofty one; but it is clear and sure. It does not aim at mighty objects; but it attains, without impracticable efforts, all those at which it aims. As it lies within the reach of all capacities, every one can without difficulty apprehend and retain it. By its adaptation to human weaknesses, it easily obtains great dominion: nor is its dominion precarious, since it employs self-interest itself to correct self-interest; and uses, to direct the passions, the very instrument which excites them.

“The doctrine of enlightened self-interest produces no great acts of self-sacrifice; but it suggests daily small acts of

self-denial. By itself it cannot suffice to make a virtuous man ; but it disciplines a multitude of citizens in habits of regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self-command ; and, if it does not at once lead men to virtue by their will, it draws them gradually in that direction by their habits. If the principle of ' interest rightly understood ' were to sway the whole moral world, extraordinary virtues would doubtless be more rare ; but I think that gross depravity would then also be less common. That principle, perhaps, prevents some men from rising far above the level of mankind ; but a great number of others, who were falling below that level, are caught and upheld by it. Observe some few individuals, they are lowered by it : survey mankind, it is raised.

" I am not afraid to say, that the principle of enlightened self-interest appears to me the best suited of all philosophical theories to the wants of the men of our time, and that I regard it as their chief remaining security against themselves. Towards it, therefore, the minds of the moralists of our age should turn. Even should they judge it incomplete, it must nevertheless be adopted as necessary.

" No power upon earth can prevent the increasing equality of conditions from impelling the human mind to seek out what is useful, or from inclining every member of the community to concentrate his affections on himself. It must therefore be expected, that personal interest will become more than ever the principal if not the sole spring of men's actions ; but it remains to be seen how each man will understand his personal interest.

" I do not think that the doctrine of self-interest, as it is professed in America, is self-evident in all its parts ; but it contains a great number of truths so evident, that men, if they are but instructed, cannot fail to see them. Instruct them, then, at all hazards : for the age of implicit self-sacrifice and instinctive virtues is already flying far away from us ; and the time is fast approaching, when freedom, public peace, and

social order itself, will not be able to exist without instruction." — Vol. iii. part ii. chap. 8.

M. de Tocqueville considers a democratic state of society as eminently tending to give the strongest impulse to the desire of physical well-being. He ascribes this not so much to the equality of conditions as to their mobility. In a country like America, every one may acquire riches: no one, at least, is artificially impeded in acquiring them, and hardly any one is born to them. Now, these are the conditions under which the passions which attach themselves to wealth, and to what wealth can purchase, are the strongest. Those who are born in the midst of affluence are generally more or less *blasés* to its enjoyments. They take the comfort or luxury to which they have always been accustomed, as they do the air they breathe. It is not *le but de la vie*, but *une manière de vivre*. An aristocracy, when put to the proof, has in general shown wonderful facility in enduring the loss of riches and of physical comforts. The very pride, nourished by the elevation which they owed to wealth, supports them under the privation of it. But to those who have chased riches laboriously for half their lives, to lose it is the loss of all; *une vie manquée*; a disappointment greater than can be endured. In a democracy, again, there is no contented poverty. No one being forced to remain poor, many who were poor daily becoming rich, and the comforts of life being apparently within the reach of all, the desire to appropriate them descends to the very lowest rank. Thus —

“The desire of acquiring the comforts of the world haunts

the imagination of the poor; and the dread of losing them, that of the rich. Many scanty fortunes spring up. Those who possess them have a sufficient share of physical gratifications to conceive a taste for those pleasures, — not enough to satisfy it. They never procure them without exertion, and they never indulge in them without apprehension. They are, therefore, always straining to pursue or to retain gratifications so precious, so incomplete, and so fugitive.

“ If I inquire what passion is most natural to men who are at once stimulated and circumscribed by the obscurity of their birth or the mediocrity of their fortune, I can discover none more peculiarly appropriate to them than this love of physical prosperity. The passion for physical comforts is essentially a passion of the middle classes: with those classes it grows and spreads, and along with them it becomes preponderant. From them it mounts into the higher orders of society, and descends into the mass of the people.

“ I never met, in America, with any citizen so poor as not to cast a glance of hope and longing towards the enjoyments of the rich, or whose imagination did not indulge itself by anticipation in those good things which fate still obstinately withheld from him.

“ On the other hand, I never perceived, amongst the wealthier inhabitants of the United States, that proud contempt of the indulgences of riches which is sometimes to be met with even in the most opulent and dissolute aristocracies. Most of these wealthy persons were once poor. They have felt the stimulus of privation; they have long struggled with adverse fortune; and, now that the victory is won, the passions which accompanied the contest have survived it: their minds are, as it were, intoxicated by the petty enjoyments which they have pursued for forty years.

“ Not but that in the United States, as elsewhere, there are a certain number of wealthy persons, who, having come into their property by inheritance, possess, without exertion,

an opulence they have not earned. But even these are not less devotedly attached to the pleasures of material life. The love of physical comfort is become the predominant taste of the nation: the great current of man's passions runs in that channel, and sweeps every thing along in its course." — Vol. iii. part ii. chap. 10.

A regulated sensuality thus establishes itself, — the parent of effeminacy rather than of debauchery; paying respect to the social rights of other people, and to the opinion of the world; not "leading men away in search of forbidden enjoyments, but absorbing them in the pursuit of permitted ones. This spirit is frequently combined with a species of religious morality: men wish to be as well off as they can in this world, without foregoing their chance of another."

From the preternatural stimulus given to the desire of acquiring and of enjoying wealth, by the intense competition which necessarily exists where an entire population are the competitors, arises the restlessness so characteristic of American life.

"It is strange to see with what feverish ardor the Americans pursue their own welfare; and to watch the vague dread that constantly torments them, lest they should not have chosen the shortest path which may lead to it. A native of the United States clings to this world's goods as if he were certain never to die; and is so hasty in grasping at all within his reach, that one would suppose he was constantly afraid of not living long enough to enjoy them. He clutches every thing; he holds nothing fast, but soon loosens his grasp to pursue fresh gratifications. . . .

"At first sight, there is something surprising in this strange unrest of so many happy men, uneasy in the midst of abun-

dance. The spectacle is, however, as old as the world: the novelty is to see a whole people furnish an example of it. . . .

“When all the privileges of birth and fortune are abolished; when all professions are accessible to all, and a man’s own energies may place him at the top of any one of them, — an easy and unbounded career seems open to his ambition, and he will readily persuade himself that he is born to no vulgar destinies. But this is an erroneous notion, which is corrected by daily experience. The same equality which allows every citizen to conceive these lofty hopes renders all the citizens individually feeble. It circumscribes their powers on every side, while it gives freer scope to their desires. Not only are they restrained by their own weakness, but they are met at every step by immense obstacles, which they did not at first perceive. They have swept away the privileges of some of their fellow-creatures which stood in their way; but they have now to encounter the competition of all. The barrier has changed its shape rather than its place. When men are nearly alike, and all follow the same track, it is very difficult for any one individual to get on fast, and cleave a way through the homogeneous throng which surrounds and presses upon him. This constant strife between the wishes springing from the equality of conditions, and the means it supplies to satisfy them, harasses and wearies the mind.” — Vol. iii. part ii. chap. 13.

And hence, according to M. de Tocqueville, while every one is devoured by ambition, hardly any one is ambitious on a large scale. Among so many competitors for but a few great prizes, none of the candidates starting from the vantage-ground of an elevated social position, very few can hope to gain those prizes, and they not until late in life. Men in general, therefore,



do not look so high. A vast energy of passion in a whole community is developed and squandered in the petty pursuit of petty advancements in fortune, and the hurried snatching of petty pleasures.

To sum up our author's opinion of the dangers to which mankind are liable as they advance towards equality of condition : his fear, both in government and in intellect and morals, is not of too great liberty, but of too ready submission ; not of anarchy, but of servility ; not of too rapid change, but of Chinese stationariness. As Democracy advances, the opinions of mankind on most subjects of general interest will become, he believes, as compared with any former period, more rooted, and more difficult to change ; and mankind are more and more in danger of losing the moral courage, and pride of independence, which make them deviate from the beaten path, either in speculation or in conduct. Even in politics, it is to be apprehended, lest, feeling their personal insignificance, and conceiving a proportionally vast idea of the importance of society at large ; being jealous, moreover, of one another, but not jealous of the central power, which derives its origin from the majority, or which at least is the faithful representative of its desire to annihilate every intermediate power, — they should allow that central government to assume more and more control, engross more and more of the business of society ; and, on condition of making itself the organ of the general mode of feeling and thinking, should suffer it to relieve mankind from the care of their own interests, and keep them under a kind of tutelage ; trampling, meanwhile, with considerable recklessness, as often as convenient,

upon the rights of individuals, in the name of society and the public good.

Against these political evils, the corrective to which our author looks, is popular education, and, above all, the spirit of liberty, fostered by the extension and dissemination of political rights. Democratic institutions, therefore, are his remedy for the worst mischiefs to which a democratic state of society is exposed. As for those to which democratic institutions are themselves liable, these, he holds, society must struggle with, and bear with so much of them as it cannot find the means of conquering. For M. de Tocqueville is no believer in the reality of mixed governments. There is, he says, always and everywhere, a strongest power: in every government, either the king, the aristocracy, or the people, have an effective predominance, and can carry any point on which they set their heart. "When a community really comes to have a mixed government, that is, to be equally divided between two adverse principles, it is either falling into a revolutionary state or into dissolution." M. de Tocqueville believes that the preponderant power which must exist everywhere is most rightly placed in the body of the people; but he thinks it most pernicious, that this power, whether residing in the people or elsewhere, should be "checked by no obstacles which may retard its course, and force it to moderate its own vehemence." The difference, in his eyes, is great between one sort of democratic institutions and another. That form of Democracy should be sought out and devised, and in every way endeavored to be carried into practice, which, on the one hand, most exercises and cultivates the intelligence and

mental activity of the majority; and, on the other, breaks the headlong impulses of popular opinion, by delay, rigor of forms, and adverse discussion. "The organization and the establishment of Democracy" on these principles "is the great political problem of our time."

And, when this problem is solved, there remains an equally serious one, — to make head against the tendency of Democracy towards bearing down individuality, and circumscribing the exercise of the human faculties within narrow limits. To sustain the higher pursuits of philosophy and art; to vindicate and protect the unfettered exercise of reason, and the moral freedom of the individual, — these are purposes, to which, under a Democracy, the superior spirits, and the government so far as it is permitted, should devote their utmost energies.

"I shall conclude by one general idea, which comprises not only all the particular ideas which have been expressed in the present chapter, but also most of those which it is the object of this book to treat of.

"In the ages of aristocracy which preceded our own, there were private persons of great power, and a social authority of extreme weakness. The principal efforts of the men of those times were required to strengthen, aggrandize, and secure the supreme power; and, on the other hand, to circumscribe individual independence within narrower limits, and to subject private interests to public. Other perils and other cares await the men of our age. Amongst the greater part of modern nations, the government, whatever may be its origin, its constitution, or its name, has become almost omnipotent; and private persons are falling, more and more, into the lowest stage of weakness and dependence.

“The general character of old society was diversity: unity and uniformity were nowhere to be met with. In modern society, all things threaten to become so much alike, that the peculiar characteristics of each individual will be entirely lost in the uniformity of the general aspect. Our forefathers were ever prone to make an improper use of the notion, that private rights ought to be respected; and we are naturally prone, on the other hand, to exaggerate the idea, that the interest of an individual ought to bend to the interest of the many.

“The political world is metamorphosed: new remedies must henceforth be sought for new disorders. To lay down extensive, but distinct and immovable, limits to the action of the ruling power; to confer certain rights on private persons, and secure to them the undisputed enjoyment of their rights; to enable individual man to maintain whatever independence, strength, and originality he still possesses; to raise him by the side of society at large, and uphold him in that position,—these appear to me the main objects for the legislator in the age upon which we are now entering.

“It would seem as if the rulers of our time sought only to use men in order to effect great things. I wish that they would try a little more to make great men; that they would set less value upon the work, and more upon the workmen; that they would never forget, that a nation cannot long remain strong, when every man belonging to it is individually weak; and that no form or combination of social polity has yet been devised to make an energetic people out of a community of citizens personally feeble and pusillanimous.”—  
Vol. iv. part iv. chap. 7.

If we were here to close this article, and leave these noble speculations to produce their effect without further comment, the reader, probably, would not blame us. Our recommendation is not needed in their behalf.

That nothing on the whole comparable in profundity to them had yet been written on Democracy, will scarcely be disputed by any one who has read even our hasty abridgment of them. We must guard, at the same time, against attaching to these conclusions, or to any others that can result from such inquiries, a character of scientific certainty that can never belong to them. Democracy is too recent a phenomenon, and of too great magnitude, for any one who now lives to comprehend its consequences. A few of its more immediate tendencies may be perceived or surmised: what other tendencies, destined to overrule or to combine with these, lie behind, there are not grounds even to conjecture. If we revert to any similar fact in past history, any change in human affairs approaching in greatness to what is passing before our eyes, we shall find that no prediction which could have been made at the time, or for many generations afterwards, would have borne any resemblance to what has actually been the course of events. When the Greek commonwealths were crushed, and liberty in the civilized world apparently extinguished by the Macedonian invaders; when a rude, unlettered people of Italy stretched their conquests and their dominion from one end to the other of the known world; when that people in turn lost its freedom and its old institutions, and fell under the military despotism of one of its own citizens, — what similarity is there between the effects we now know to have been produced by these causes, and any thing which the wisest person could then have anticipated from them? When the Roman Empire, containing all the art, science, literature, and industry of the world,

was overrun, ravaged, and dismembered by hordes of barbarians, everybody lamented the destruction of civilization, in an event which is now admitted to have been the necessary condition of its renovation. When the Christian religion had existed but for two centuries; when the pope was only beginning to assert his ascendancy, — what philosopher or statesman could have foreseen the destinies of Christianity, or the part which has been acted in history by the Catholic Church? It is thus with other really great historical facts, — the invention of gunpowder for instance, or of the printing-press. Even when their direct operation is as exactly measurable, because as strictly mechanical, as these were, the mere scale on which they operate gives birth to endless consequences, of a kind which would have appeared visionary to the most far-seeing cotemporary wisdom.

It is not, therefore, without a deep sense of the uncertainty attaching to such predictions, that the wise would hazard an opinion as to the fate of mankind under the new democratic dispensation. But, without pretending to judge confidently of remote tendencies, those immediate ones which are already developing themselves require to be dealt with as we treat any of the other circumstances in which we are placed, — by encouraging those which are salutary, and working out the means by which such as are hurtful may be counteracted. To exhort men to this, and to aid them in doing it, is the end for which M. de Tocqueville has written: and in the same spirit we will now venture to make one criticism upon him, — to point out one correction, of which we think his views stand in need;

and for want of which they have occasionally an air of over-subtlety and false refinement, exciting the distrust of common readers, and making the opinions themselves appear less true, and less practically important, than, it seems to us, they really are.

M. de Tocqueville, then, has, at least apparently, confounded the effects of Democracy with the effects of Civilization. He has bound up in one abstract idea the whole of the tendencies of modern commercial society, and given them one name, — Democracy; thereby letting it be supposed that he ascribes to equality of conditions several of the effects naturally arising from the mere progress of national prosperity, in the form in which that progress manifests itself in modern times.

It is no doubt true, that, among the tendencies of commercial civilization, a tendency to the equalization of conditions is one, and not the least conspicuous. When a nation is advancing in prosperity; when its industry is expanding, and its capital rapidly augmenting, — the number also of those who possess capital increases in at least as great a proportion; and, though the distance between the two extremes of society may not be much diminished, there is a rapid multiplication of those who occupy the intermediate positions. There may be princes at one end of the scale, and paupers at the other; but between them there will be a respectable and well-paid class of artisans, and a middle class who combine property and industry. This may be called, and is, a tendency to equalization. But this growing equality is only one of the features of progressive civilization; one of the incidental effects of the progress of

industry and wealth, — a most important effect, and one which, as our author shows, re-acts in a hundred ways upon the other effects; but not, therefore, to be confounded with the cause.

So far is it, indeed, from being admissible, that *mere* equality of conditions is the mainspring of those moral and social phenomena which M. de Tocqueville has characterized, that when some unusual chance exhibits to us equality of conditions by itself, severed from that commercial state of society and that progress of industry of which it is the natural concomitant, it produces few or none of the moral effects ascribed to it. Consider, for instance, the French of Lower Canada. Equality of conditions is more universal there than in the United States; for the whole people, without exception, are in easy circumstances, and there are not even that considerable number of rich individuals who are to be found in all the great towns of the American Republic. Yet, do we find in Canada that go-ahead spirit; that restless, impatient eagerness for improvement in circumstances; that mobility; that shifting and fluctuating, — now up, now down, now here, now there; that absence of classes and class-spirit; that jealousy of superior attainments; that want of deference for authority and leadership; that habit of bringing things to the rule and square of each man's own understanding, — which M. de Tocqueville imputes to the same cause in the United States? In all these respects, the very contrary qualities prevail. We by no means deny, that, where the other circumstances which determine these effects exist, equality of conditions has a very perceptible effect in corroborating them. We think M.



de Tocqueville has shown that it has ; but that it is the exclusive, or even the principal cause, we think the example of Canada goes far to disprove.

For the reverse of this experiment, we have only to look at home. Of all countries in a state of progressive commercial civilization, Great Britain is that in which the equalization of conditions has made least progress. The extremes of wealth and poverty are wider apart ; and there is a more numerous body of persons, at each extreme, than in any other commercial community. From the habits of the population in regard to marriage, the poor have remained poor : from the laws which tend to keep large masses of property together, the rich have remained rich ; and often, when they have lost the substance of riches, have retained its social advantages and outward trappings. Great fortunes are continually accumulated, and seldom redistributed. In this respect, therefore, England is the most complete contrast to the United States. But in commercial prosperity, in the rapid growth of industry and wealth, she is the next after America, and not very much inferior to her. Accordingly, we appeal to all competent observers, whether, in nearly all the moral and intellectual features of American society, as represented by M. de Tocqueville, this country does not stand next to America ; whether, with the single difference of our remaining respect for aristocracy, the American people, both in their good qualities and in their defects, resemble any thing so much as an exaggeration of our own middle class ; whether the spirit, which is gaining more and more the ascendant with us, is not in a very great degree American ; and whether all the moral

elements of an American state of society are not most rapidly growing up.

For example, that entire unfixeness in the social position of individuals; that treading upon the heels of one another; that habitual dissatisfaction of each with the position he occupies, and eager desire to push himself into the next above it, — has not this become, and is it not becoming more and more, an English characteristic? In England, as well as in America, it appears to foreigners, and even to Englishmen recently returned from a foreign country, as if everybody had but one wish, — to improve his condition, never to enjoy it: as if no Englishman cared to cultivate either the pleasures or the virtues corresponding to his station in society, but solely to get out of it as quickly as possible; or if that cannot be done, and until it is done, to seem to have got out of it. "The hypocrisy of luxury," as M. de Tocqueville calls the maintaining an appearance beyond one's real expenditure, he considers as a democratic peculiarity. It is surely an English one. The highest class of all, indeed, is, as might be expected, comparatively exempt from these bad peculiarities. But the very existence of such a class, whose immunities and political privileges are attainable by wealth, tends to aggravate the struggle of the other classes for the possession of that passport to all other importance; and it perhaps required the example of America to prove that the "sabbathless pursuit of wealth" could be as intensely prevalent, where there were no aristocratic distinctions to tempt to it.

Again: the mobility and fluctuating nature of individual relations; the absence of permanent ties, local or

personal, — how often has this been commented on as one of the organic changes by which the ancient structure of English society is becoming dissolved? Without reverting to the days of clanship, or to those in which the gentry led a patriarchal life among their tenantry and neighbors, the memory of man extends to a time when the same tenants remained attached to the same landlords, the same servants to the same household. But this, with other old customs, after progressively retiring to the remote corners of our island, has nearly taken flight altogether; and it may now be said, that in all the relations of life, except those to which law and religion have given permanence, change has become the general rule, and constancy the exception.

The remainder of the tendencies which M. de Tocqueville has delineated may mostly be brought under one general agency as their immediate cause, — the growing insignificance of individuals in comparison with the mass. Now, it would be difficult to show any country in which this insignificance is more marked and conspicuous than in England, or any incompatibility between that tendency and aristocratic institutions. It is not because the individuals composing the mass are all equal, but because the mass itself has grown to so immense a size, that individuals are powerless in the face of it; and because the mass, having by mechanical improvements become capable of acting simultaneously, can compel, not merely any individual, but any number of individuals, to bend before it. The House of Lords is the richest and most powerful collection of persons in Europe; yet they not only could not prevent, but were themselves compelled to pass, the Reform Bill. The

daily actions of every peer and peeress are falling more and more under the yoke of *bourgeois* opinion: they feel every day a stronger necessity of showing an immaculate front to the world. When they do venture to disregard common opinion, it is in a body, and when supported by one another; whereas formerly every nobleman acted on his own notions, and dared be as eccentric as he pleased. No rank in society is now exempt from the fear of being peculiar; the unwillingness to be, or to be thought, in any respect original. Hardly any thing now depends upon individuals, but all upon classes; and, among classes, mainly upon the middle class. That class is now the power in society, the arbiter of fortune and success. Ten times more money is made by supplying the wants, even the superfluous wants, of the middle, nay of the lower classes, than those of the higher. It is the middle class that now rewards even literature and art: the books by which most money is made are the cheap books; the greatest part of the profit of a picture is the profit of the engraving from it. Accordingly, all the intellectual effects which M. de Tocquéville ascribes to Democracy are taking place under the Democracy of the middle class. There is a greatly augmented number of moderate successes, fewer great literary and scientific reputations. Elementary and popular treatises are immensely multiplied; superficial information far more widely diffused: but there are fewer who devote themselves to thought for its own sake, and pursue in retirement those profounder researches, the results of which can only be appreciated by a few. Literary productions are seldom highly finished: they are got up to be read by many,

and to be read but once. If the work sells for a day, the author's time and pains will be better laid out in writing a second than in improving the first. And this is not because books are no longer written for the aristocracy: they never were so. The aristocracy (saving individual exceptions) never were a reading class. It is because books are now written for a numerous, and therefore an unlearned public; no longer principally for scholars, and men of science, who have knowledge of their own, and are not imposed upon by half-knowledge; who have studied the great works of genius, and can make comparisons.\*

As for the decay of authority, and diminution of respect for traditional opinions, this could not well be so far advanced among an ancient people, — all whose political notions rest on an historical basis, and whose institutions themselves are built on prescription, and not on ideas of expediency, as in America, where the whole edifice of government was constructed, within

\* On this account, among others, we think M. de Tocqueville right in the great importance he attaches to the study of Greek and Roman literature; not as being without faults, but as having the contrary faults to those of our own day. Not only do those literatures furnish examples of high finish and perfection in workmanship, to correct the slovenly habits of modern hasty writing; but they exhibit, in the military and agricultural commonwealths of antiquity, precisely that order of virtues in which a commercial society is apt to be deficient: and they altogether show human nature on a grander scale, — with less benevolence, but more patriotism; less sentiment, but more self-control; if a lower average of virtue, more striking individual examples of it; fewer small goodnesses, but more greatness, and appreciation of greatness; more which tends to exalt the imagination, and inspire high conceptions of the capabilities of human nature. If, as every one may see, the want of affinity of these studies to the modern mind is gradually lowering them in popular estimation, this is but a confirmation of the need of them, and renders it more incumbent upon those who have the power to do their utmost towards preventing their decline.

the memory of man, upon abstract principles. But surely this change also is taking place as fast as could be expected under the circumstances. And even this effect, though it has a more direct connection with Democracy, has not an exclusive one. Respect for old opinions must diminish wherever science and knowledge are rapidly progressive. As the people in general become aware of the recent date of the most important physical discoveries, they are liable to form a rather contemptuous opinion of their ancestors. The mere visible fruits of scientific progress in a wealthy society, the mechanical improvements, the steam-engines, the railroads, carry the feeling of admiration for modern, and disrespect for ancient times, down even to the wholly uneducated classes. For that other mental characteristic which M. de Tocqueville finds in America, — a positive, matter-of-fact spirit; a demand that all things shall be made clear to each man's understanding; an indifference to the subtler proofs which address themselves to more cultivated and systematically exercised intellects; for what may be called, in short, the dogmatism of common sense, — we need not look beyond our own country. There needs no Democracy to account for this: there needs only the habit of energetic action, without a proportional development of the taste for speculation. Bonaparte was one of the most remarkable examples of it; and the diffusion of half-instruction, without any sufficient provision made by society for sustaining the higher cultivation, tends greatly to encourage its excess.

Nearly all those moral and social influences, therefore, which are the subject of M. de Tocqueville's Second

Part, are shown to be in full operation in aristocratic England. What connection they have with equality is with the growth of the middle class, not with the annihilation of the extremes. They are quite compatible with the existence of peers and *prolétaires*; nay, with the most abundant provision of both those varieties of human nature. If we were sure of retaining for ever our aristocratic institutions, society would no less have to struggle against all these tendencies; and perhaps even the loss of those institutions would not have so much effect as is supposed in accelerating their triumph.

The evil is not in the preponderance of a democratic class, but of any class. The defects which M. de Tocqueville points out in the American, and which we see in the modern English mind, are the ordinary ones of a commercial class. The portion of society which is predominant in America, and that which is attaining predominance here, the American many, and our middle class, agree in being commercial classes. The one country is affording a complete, and the other a progressive, exemplification, that, whenever any variety of human nature becomes preponderant in a community, it imposes upon all the rest of society its own type; forcing all either to submit to it or to imitate it.

It is not in China only that a homogeneous community is naturally a stationary community. The unlikeness of one person to another is not only a principle of improvement, but would seem almost to be the only principle. It is profoundly remarked by M. Guizot, that the short duration or stunted growth of the earlier civilizations arose from this,—that, in each of them, some

one element of human improvement existed exclusively, or so preponderatingly as to overpower all the others; whereby the community, after accomplishing rapidly all which that one element could do, either perished for want of what it could not do, or came to a halt, and became immovable. It would be an error to suppose that such could not possibly be our fate. In the generalization which pronounces the "law of progress" to be an inherent attribute of human nature, it is forgotten, that, among the inhabitants of our earth, the European family of nations is the only one which has ever yet shown any capability of spontaneous improvement, beyond a certain low level. Let us beware of supposing that we owe this peculiarity to any superiority of nature, and not rather to combinations of circumstances, which have existed nowhere else, and may not exist for ever among ourselves. The spirit of commerce and industry is one of the greatest instruments, not only of civilization in the narrowest, but of improvement and culture in the widest, sense: to it, or to its consequences, we owe nearly all that advantageously distinguishes the present period from the middle ages. So long as other co-ordinate elements of improvement existed beside it, doing what it left undone, and keeping its exclusive tendencies in equipoise by an opposite order of sentiments, principles of action, and modes of thought, — so long the benefits which it conferred on humanity were unqualified. But example and theory alike justify the expectation, that with its complete preponderance would commence an era either of stationariness or of decline.

If, to avert this consummation, it were necessary that the class which wields the strongest power in society



should be prevented from exercising its strength, or that those who are powerful enough to overthrow the government should not claim a paramount control over it, the case of civilized nations would be almost hopeless. But human affairs are not entirely governed by mechanical laws, nor men's characters wholly and irrevocably formed by their situation in life. Economical and social changes, though among the greatest, are not the only forces which shape the course of our species. Ideas are not always the mere signs and effects of social circumstances: they are themselves a power in history. Let the idea take hold of the more generous and cultivated minds, that the most serious danger to the future prospects of mankind is in the unbalanced influence of the commercial spirit; let the wiser and better-hearted politicians and public teachers look upon it as their most pressing duty, to protect and strengthen whatever, in the heart of man or in his outward life, can form a salutary check to the exclusive tendencies of that spirit, — and we should not only have individual testimonies against it, in all the forms of genius, from those who have the privilege of speaking, not to their own age merely, but to all time: there would also gradually shape itself forth a national education, which, without overlooking any other of the requisites of human well-being, would be adapted to this purpose in particular.

What is requisite in politics for the same end, is, not that public opinion should not be, what it is and must be, the ruling power, but that, in order to the formation of the best public opinion, there should exist somewhere a great social support for opinions and sentiments different from those of the mass. The shape which that

support may best assume is a question of time, place, and circumstance; but (in a commercial country, and an age, when, happily for mankind, the military spirit is gone by) there can be no doubt about the elements which must compose it: they are, an agricultural class, a leisured class, and a learned class.

The natural tendencies of an agricultural class are in many respects the reverse of those of a manufacturing and commercial. In the first place, from their more scattered position, and less exercised activity of mind, they have usually a greater willingness to look up to, and accept of, guidance. In the next place, they are the class who have local attachments; and it is astonishing how much of character depends upon this one circumstance. If the agricultural spirit is not felt in America as a counterpoise to the commercial, it is because American agriculturists have no local attachments: they range from place to place, and are, to all intents and purposes, a commercial class. But in an old country, where the same family has long occupied the same land, the case will naturally be different. From attachment to places, follows attachment to persons who are associated with those places. Though no longer the permanent tie which it once was, the connection between tenants and landlords is one not lightly broken off,—one which both parties, when they enter into it, desire and hope will be permanent. Again: with attachment to the place comes generally attachment to the occupation: a farmer seldom becomes any thing but a farmer. The rage of money-getting can scarcely, in agricultural occupations, reach any dangerous height: except where bad laws have aggravated the natural fluctuations of price, there is

little room for gambling. The rewards of industry and skill are sure, but moderate: an agriculturist can rarely make a large fortune. A manufacturer or merchant, unless he can outstrip others, knows that others will outstrip him, and ruin him; while, in the irksome drudgery to which he subjects himself as a means, there is nothing agreeable to dwell on except the ultimate end. But agriculture is in itself an interesting occupation, which few wish to retire from, and which men of property and education often pursue merely for their amusement. Men so occupied are satisfied with less gain, and are less impatient to realize it. Our town population, it has long been remarked, is becoming almost as mobile and uneasy as the American. It ought not to be so with our agriculturists: they ought to be the counterbalancing element in our national character: they should represent the type opposite to the commercial, — that of moderate wishes, tranquil tastes, cultivation of the excitements and enjoyments near at hand, and compatible with their existing position.

To attain this object, how much alteration may be requisite in the system of rack-renting and tenancy at will, we cannot undertake to show in this place. It is sufficiently obvious, also, that the corn-laws must disappear; there must be no feud raging between the commercial class and that by whose influence and example its excesses are to be tempered: men are not prone to adopt the characteristics of their enemies. Nor is this all. In order that the agricultural population should count for any thing in politics, or contribute its part to the formation of the national character, it is absolutely necessary that it should be educated. And let it be

remembered, that, in an agricultural people, the diffusion of information and intelligence must necessarily be artificial, — the work of government, or of the superior classes. In populous towns, the mere collision of man with man, the keenness of competition, the habits of society and discussion, the easy access to reading, — even the dulness of the ordinary occupations, which drives men to other excitements, — produce of themselves a certain development of intelligence. The least favored class of a town population are seldom actually stupid; and have often, in some directions, a morbid keenness and acuteness. It is otherwise with the peasantry. Whatever it is desired that they should know, they must be taught; whatever intelligence is expected to grow up among them must first be implanted, and sedulously nursed.

It is not needful to go into a similar analysis of the tendencies of the other two classes, — a leisured and a learned class. The capabilities which they possess for controlling the excess of the commercial spirit by a contrary spirit are at once apparent. We regard it as one of the greatest advantages of this country over America, that it possesses both these classes: and we believe that the interests of the time to come are greatly dependent upon preserving them; and upon their being rendered, as they much require to be, better and better qualified for their important functions.

If we believed that the national character of England, instead of re-acting upon the American character and raising it, was gradually assimilating itself to those points of it which the best and wisest Americans see with most uneasiness, it would be no consolation to us

to think that we might possibly avoid the institutions of America ; for we should have all the effects of her institutions, except those which are beneficial. The American many are not essentially a different class from our ten-pound householders ; and, if the middle class are left to the mere habits and instincts of a commercial community, we shall have a "tyranny of the majority," not the less irksome because most of the tyrants may not be manual laborers. For it is a chimerical hope to overbear or outnumber the middle class : whatever modes of voting, whatever redistribution of the constituencies, are really necessary for placing the government in their hands, those, whether we like it or not, they will assuredly obtain.

The ascendancy of the commercial class in modern society and politics is inevitable, and, under due limitations, ought not to be regarded as an evil. That class is the most powerful ; but it needs not therefore be all-powerful. Now, as ever, the great problem in government is to prevent the strongest from becoming the only power, and repress the natural tendency of the instincts and passions of the ruling body to sweep away all barriers which are capable of resisting, even for a moment, their own tendencies. Any counterbalancing power can henceforth exist only by the sufferance of the commercial class ; but that it should tolerate some such limitation, we deem as important as that it should not itself be held in vassalage.

[As a specimen of the contrivances for "organizing Democracy," which, without sacrificing any of its beneficial tendencies, are adapted to counterbalance and correct its characteristic infirmities, an extract is subjoined from another paper by the author, published in 1846: being a review of the

“Lettres Politiques” of M. Charles Duveyrier; a book which, among many other valuable suggestions, anticipated Sir Charles Trevelyan in the proposal to make admission into the service of government in all cases the prize of success in a public and competitive examination.]

“Every people,” says M. Duveyrier, “comprises, and probably will always comprise, two societies, — an *administration* and a *public*: the one, of which the general interest is the supreme law, where positions are not hereditary, but the principle is that of classing its members according to their merit, and rewarding them according to their works, and where the moderation of salaries is compensated by their fixity, and especially by honor and consideration; the other, composed of landed proprietors, of capitalists, of masters and workmen, among whom the supreme law is that of inheritance, the principal rule of conduct is personal interest, competition and struggle the favorite elements.

“These two societies serve mutually as a counterpoise: they continually act and re-act upon one another. The public tends to introduce into the administration the stimulus naturally wanting to it, — the principle of emulation. The administration, conformably to its appointed purpose, tends to introduce more and more, into the mass of the public, elements of order and forethought. In this twofold direction, the administration and the public have rendered, and do render daily, to each other, reciprocal services.”

The Chamber of Deputies (he proceeds to say) represents the public and its tendencies. The Chamber of Peers represents, or from its constitution is fitted to represent, those who are or have been public functionaries; whose appointed duty and occupation it has been to look at questions from the point of view, not of any mere local or sectional, but of the general interest; and who have the judgment and knowledge resulting

from labor and experience. To a body like this it naturally belongs to take the initiative in all legislation, not of a constitutional or organic character. If, in the natural course of things, well-considered views of policy are anywhere to be looked for, it must be among such a body. To no other acceptance can such views, when originating elsewhere, be so appropriately submitted, — through no other organ so fitly introduced into the laws.

We shall not enter into the considerations by which the author attempts to impress upon the peers this elevated view of their function in the commonwealth. On a new body, starting fresh as a senate, those considerations might have influence. But the senate of France is not a new body. It set out on the discredited foundation of the old hereditary chamber; and its change of character only takes place gradually, as the members die off. To redeem a lost position is more difficult than to create a new one. The new members, joining a body of no weight, become accustomed to political insignificance; they have mostly passed the age of enterprise; and the peerage is considered little else than an honorable retirement for the invalids of the public service. M. Duveyrier's suggestion has made some impression upon the public: it has gained him the public ear, and launched his doctrines into discussion; but we do not find that the conduct of the peers has been at all affected by it. Energy is precisely that quality, which, if men have it not of themselves, cannot be breathed into them by other people's advice and exhortations. There are involved, however, in this speculation, some ideas of a more general character, not

unworthy of the attention of those who concern themselves about the social changes which the future must produce.

There are, we believe, few real thinkers, of whatever party, who have not reflected with some anxiety upon the views which have become current of late respecting the irresistible tendency of modern society towards Democracy. The sure, and now no longer slow, advance, by which the classes hitherto in the ascendant are merging into the common mass, and all other forces giving way before the power of mere numbers, is well calculated to inspire uneasiness, even in those to whom Democracy *per se* presents nothing alarming. It is not the uncontrolled ascendancy of popular power, but of any power, which is formidable. There is no one power in society, or capable of being constituted in it, of which the influences do not become mischievous as soon as it reigns uncontrolled, — as soon as it becomes exempted from any necessity of being in the right, by being able to make its mere will prevail, without the condition of a previous struggle. To render its ascendancy safe, it must be fitted with correctives and counteractives, possessing the qualities opposite to its characteristic defects. Now, the defects to which the government of numbers, whether in the pure American or in the mixed English form, is most liable, are precisely those of a public as compared with an administration. Want of appreciation of distant objects and remote consequences; where an object is desired, want both of an adequate sense of practical difficulties, and of the sagacity necessary for eluding them; disregard of traditions, and of maxims sanctioned by experience;



an undervaluing of the importance of fixed rules, when immediate purposes require a departure from them,— these are among the acknowledged dangers of popular government; and there is the still greater, though less recognized, danger of being ruled by a spirit of suspicious and intolerant mediocrity. Taking these things into consideration, and also the progressive decline of the existing checks and counterpoises, and the little probability there is that the influence of mere wealth, still less of birth, will be sufficient hereafter to restrain the tendencies of the growing power by mere passive resistance, we do not think that a nation, whose historical antecedents give it any choice, could select a fitter basis upon which to ground the counterbalancing power in the State, than the principle of the French Upper House. The defects of representative assemblies are, in substance, those of unskilled politicians. The mode of raising a power most competent to their correction would be an organization and combination of the skilled. History affords the example of a government carried on for centuries with the greatest consistency of purpose, and the highest skill and talent, ever realized in public affairs; and it was constituted on this very principle. The Roman Senate was a senate for life, composed of all who had filled high offices in the State, and were not disqualified by a public note of disgrace. The faults of the Roman policy were in its ends; which, however, were those of all the States of the ancient world. Its choice of means was consummate. This government, and others distantly approaching to it, have given to aristocracy all the credit which it has obtained for constancy and wisdom.

A senate of some such description, composed of persons no longer young, and whose reputation is already gained, will necessarily lean to the Conservative side; but not with the blind, merely instinctive spirit of Conservatism, generated by mere wealth or social importance unearned by previous labor. Such a body would secure a due hearing and a reasonable regard for precedent and established rule. It would disarm jealousy by its freedom from any class-interest; and while it never could become the really predominant power in the State, still, since its position would be the consequence of recognized merit and actual services to the public, it would have as much personal influence, and excite as little hostility, as is compatible with resisting in any degree the tendencies of the really strongest power.

There is another class of considerations connected with representative governments, to which we shall also briefly advert. In proportion as it has been better understood what legislation is, and the unity of plan as well as maturity of deliberation which are essential to it, thinking persons have asked themselves the question, Whether a popular body of six hundred fifty-eight or four hundred fifty-nine members, not specially educated for the purpose, having served no apprenticeship, and undergone no examination, and who transact business in the forms and very much in the spirit of a debating society, can have as its peculiarly appropriate office to make laws;—whether that is not a work certain to be spoiled by putting such a superfluous number of hands upon it;—whether it is not essentially a business for one, or a very small number, of

most carefully prepared and selected individuals;— and whether the proper office of a representative body (in addition to controlling the public expenditure, and deciding who shall hold office) be not that of *discussing* all national interests; of giving expression to the wishes and feelings of the country; and granting or withholding its consent to the laws which others make, rather than themselves framing or even altering them? The law of this and most other nations is already such a chaos, that the quality of what is yearly added does not materially affect the general mass; but in a country possessed of a real code or digest, and desirous of retaining that advantage, who could think, without dismay, of its being tampered with at the will of a body like the House of Commons or the Chamber of Deputies? Imperfect as is the French Code, the inconveniences arising from this cause are already strongly felt; and they afford an additional inducement for associating with the popular body a skilled Senate, or Council of Legislation, which, whatever might be its special constitution, must be grounded upon some form of the principle which we have now considered.

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May 21. '90.

BAILEY ON BERKELEY'S THEORY OF  
VISION.\*

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THE doctrine concerning the original and derivative functions of the sense of sight, which, from the name of its author, is known as Berkeley's "Theory of Vision," has remained, almost from its first promulgation, one of the least disputed doctrines in the most disputed and most disputable of all sciences, — the science of man. This is the more remarkable, as no doctrine in mental philosophy is more at variance with first appearances, more contradictory to the natural prejudices of mankind. Yet this apparent paradox was no sooner published, than it took its place, almost without contestation, among established opinions: the warfare which has since distracted the world of metaphysics has swept past this insulated position without disturbing it; and, while so many of the other conclusions of the analytical school of mental philosophy, the school of Hobbes and Locke, have been repudiated with violence by the antagonist school, that of common sense or innate principles, this one doctrine has been recognized and upheld by the leading thinkers of both schools alike. Adam

\* Westminster Review, October, 1842. — A Review of Berkeley's Theory of Vision, designed to show the Unsoundness of that celebrated Speculation. By Samuel Bailey, Author of Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions, &c.

Smith, Reid, Stewart, and Whewell (not to go beyond our own island) have made the doctrine as much their own, and have taken as much pains to enforce and illustrate it, as Hartley, Brown, or James Mill.

This general consent of the most contrary schools of thinkers, in support of a doctrine which conflicts alike with the natural tendencies of the mind and with the peculiar ones of the larger half of the speculative world, certainly does not prove the doctrine true. But it proves that the reasons capable of being urged in behalf of the doctrine are such as a mind accustomed to any sort of psychological inquiry must find it very difficult to resist. If the doctrine be false, there must be something radically wrong in the received modes of studying mental phenomena. It is difficult to imagine that so many minds of the highest powers, so little accustomed to agree with one another, should have been led (the majority in opposition to the whole leaning and direction of their scientific habits) into this rare and difficult unanimity by reasonings which are a mere tissue of paralogsms and *ignorationes elenchi*.

Such, however, is the thesis which Mr. Bailey, in the volume before us, has undertaken to defend; and Mr. Bailey is one, who, on any subject on which he thinks fit to write, is entitled to a respectful hearing. He is entitled on this occasion to something more, — to the thanks which are due to whoever, in the style and spirit of sober and scientific inquiry, calls in question a received opinion. The good which follows from such public questioning is not indeed without alloy. It fosters scepticism as to the worth of science, and, by creating difference where there previously was agree-

ment, enfeebles the authority of cultivated intellects over the ignorant. But, on the other hand, such a break in the line of scientific prescription applies a wholesome stimulus to the activity of thinkers; it counteracts the tendency of speculation to grow torpid on the points on which general agreement has apparently been attained; and by not permitting philosophers to take opinions upon trust from their predecessors, or from their former selves, constrains them to recall their attention to the substantial grounds on which those opinions were first adopted, and must still be received.

If the result of this re-examination be unfavorable to the received opinion, science is happily weeded of a prevailing error; if favorable, it is of no less importance that this, too, should be shown, and the dissentient, if not convinced, at least prevented from making converts. It is for the interest of philosophy, therefore, that a bold assault, by a champion whom no one can despise, upon one of the few doctrines of analytical psychology which were supposed to be out of the reach of doubt, should not be let pass without a minute examination and deliberate judgment.

It is necessary to begin by a clear statement of the doctrine which Mr. Bailey denies; especially as we think that an indistinct mode of conceiving and expressing the doctrine is the source of most of his apparent victories over it.

The theory of vision, commonly designated as Berkeley's, but, in fact, the received doctrine of modern metaphysicians, may be stated, then, as follows.

Of the information which we appear to receive, and which we really do, in the maturity of our faculties,

receive, through the eye, a part only is originally and intuitively furnished by that sense : the remainder is the result of experience and of an acquired power. The sense of sight informs us of nothing originally, except light and colors, and a certain arrangement of colored lines and points. This arrangement constitutes what are called by opticians and astronomers apparent figure, apparent position, and apparent magnitude. Of real figure, position, and magnitude, the eye teaches us nothing ; these are facts revealed exclusively by the sense of touch : but, since differences in the reality are commonly accompanied by differences also in the appearance, the mind infers the real from the apparent in consequence of experience, and with a degree of accuracy proportioned to the correctness and completeness of the data which experience affords.

Further, those colored appearances which are called visual or apparent position, figure, and magnitude, have existence only in two dimensions ; or, to speak more properly, in as many directions as are capable of being traced on a plane surface. A line, drawn from an object to the eye, or, in other words, the distance of an object from us, is not a visible thing. When we judge by the eye of the remoteness of any object, we judge by signs ; the signs being no other than those which painters use when they wish to represent the difference between a near and a remote object. We judge an object to be more distant from us by the diminution of its apparent magnitude, that is, by linear perspective ; or by that dimness or faintness of color and outline which generally increases with the distance : in other words, by aerial perspective.

Thus, then, the powers of the eyesight are of two classes, its original and its acquired powers; but the things which it discovers by its acquired powers seem to be perceived as directly as what it sees by its original capacities as a sense. Though the distance of an object from us is really a matter of judgment and inference, we cannot help fancying that we see it directly with our eyes; and though our sight can of itself inform us only of apparent magnitudes and figures, while it is our mind which from these infers the real, we believe that we see the real magnitudes and figures, or what we suppose to be so, not the apparent ones: a mistake occasioned by that law of the human mind (a consequence and corollary of the law of association) whereby a process of reasoning, which from habit is very rapidly performed, resembles, so closely as to be mistaken for, an act of intuition.

But, although opposed to first impressions and common apprehension, the doctrine in question is confirmed by a great mass of common experience. Visible objects, seen through a clear atmosphere, as travellers in Southern countries never fail to remark, seem much nearer to us; because they are seen with less diminution of their customary brightness than has generally been the case at that distance in our previous experience. A known object, seen through a mist, seems not only farther off, but also larger than usual, — a most convincing instance; for, in this case, the visual magnitude of the object, depending on the size of its picture on the retina, remains exactly the same: but, from the same apparent size, we infer a larger real size, because we have first been led by the dimness of the object to



imagine it farther off; and, at this greater distance, there is need of a larger object to produce the same visual magnitude. So powerful, however, is the law of mind, by virtue of which a rapid inference seems to be an intuition, that, when we look through a mist, we cannot hinder ourselves from fancying that we actually see things larger; although their visual magnitude, which alone even Mr. Bailey contends that we see, remains, and must remain, precisely the same.

Again: where we have no experience, our eyesight gives us no information either of distance or of real magnitude. We cannot judge, by the eye, of the distance of the heavenly bodies from us, nor does any one of them appear nearer or farther off than another; because we have no means of comparing their brightness or their apparent magnitude as it is with what it would be at some known distance. As little do we fancy we can judge, by the eye, of the magnitudes of those bodies; or, if a child fancies the moon to be no larger than a cheese, it is because he forgets that it is farther off, and draws from the visual appearance an inference, which would be well grounded if the moon and the cheese were really at an equal distance from him.

Our purpose, however, in this place, was not to illustrate or prove the theory, but to state it. In a few words, then, it is this: That the information obtained through the eye consists of two things, — sensations, and inferences from those sensations; that the sensations are merely colors variously arranged, and changes of color; that all else is inference, the work of the intellect, not of the eye; or if, in compliance with com-

mon usage, we ascribe it to the eye, we must say that the eye does it, not by an original, but by an acquired power, — a power which the eye exercises through and by means of the reasoning or inferring faculty.

This is the Berkeleian "Theory of Vision," accurately stated; and this statement of it comprises the essence of that to which the subsequent schools of psychology have unanimously assented.

But with the doctrine in this simple form we cannot find that Mr. Bailey has in any one instance really grappled. He has gone back to the primitive phraseology in which the theory was propounded by Berkeley and his immediate successors, — men to whom the glory belongs of originating many important discoveries, but who seldom added to this the easier, yet still rarer, merit of expressing those discoveries in language logically unexceptionable. No one can read the metaphysicians of the last two centuries, especially those of our own country, without acknowledging that (with one or two exceptions, among whom the great name of Hobbes stands pre-eminent) the very best of them are often wanting, either in the determinateness of thought, or the command over language, which would make their words express, shortly, precisely, and unambiguously, the very thing they mean. Accordingly, there are few of the great truths of psychology which are not, in almost all writings antecedent to the present century, wrapped up in phrases more or less equivocal and vague, through which one person may clearly see what is really within, but another, of perhaps equal powers, will, in the words of Locke, instead of "seizing the scope" of the speculation, "stick in the incidents."

Upon such vague phrases Mr. Bailey has wasted his strength, never placing the truth which they represented, plainly and unambiguously before his mind; and he imagines himself to have triumphed over the doctrine, while he has been kept from contact with it by a rampart of words which he himself has helped to raise.

One of the principal of these phrases is Perception, a word which has wrought almost as notable mischief in metaphysics as the word Idea. The writer who first made Perception a word of mark and likelihood in mental philosophy was Reid, who made use of it as a means of begging several of the questions in dispute between himself and his antagonists. Mr. Bailey, with, we admit, good warrant from precedent, has throughout his book darkened the discussion by stating the question, not thus, — What information do we gain, or what facts do we learn, by the sense of sight? but thus, — What do we perceive by the eye, or what are our perceptions of sight? The word seems made on purpose to confuse the distinction between what the eye tells us directly, and what it teaches by way of inference; and we shall presently see how completely, in our author's case, the cause has produced its effect.

It is in the first section of his second chapter that the author enters upon his argument; and in this he inquires whether "outness" (as it is termed by Berkeley) is "immediately of itself perceived by sight," — in other words, whether we naturally, and antecedently to experience, see things to be external to ourselves.

Berkeley alleged, that to a person born blind, and suddenly enabled to see, all objects would seem to be

in his eye, or rather in his mind. It would be a more correct version, however, of the theory, to say that such a person would at first have no conception of *in* or *out*; and would only be conscious of colors, but not of objects. When, by his sense of touch, he became acquainted with objects, and had time to associate mentally the objects he touched with the colors he saw, then, and not till then, would he begin to see objects. Or, adopting Mr. Bailey's summary statement of Berkeley's views, "Outness is not immediately of itself perceived by sight, but only suggested to our thoughts by certain visible ideas and sensations attending vision. . . . By a connection taught us by experience, visible ideas and visual sensations come to signify and suggest outness to us, after the same manner that the words of any language suggest the ideas they are made to stand for."

To this, Mr. Bailey replies, that the law of mind, by which one thing suggests another, cannot produce any such effect as the one here ascribed to it. If we have had an internal feeling A, at the same time with an external sensation B, and this conjunction has occurred often, the two will in time suggest one another: when the internal feeling occurs, it will bring to mind the external one; and *vice versâ*. But Berkeley's theory, he says, demands more than this. Berkeley maintains, that, because the internal feeling has been found to be accompanied by the external one, it will, when experienced alone, not only suggest the external sensation, "but absolutely be regarded as external itself, or rather be converted into the perception of an external object:" just as if one were to assert that the sound

"rose," by suggesting the visible flower, became itself visible.

"It may be asserted," says Mr. Bailey, "without hesitation, that there is nothing in the whole operations of the human mind analogous to such a process;" and it may be asserted as unhesitatingly, that Berkeley's theory implies no such absurdity.

The internal feeling, which, when received by sight, becomes a sign of the presence of an external object, is a sensation of color. Does Berkeley pretend, or is it a fact, that this sensation is ever regarded as external? Certainly not. What we regard as external is not the sensation, but the cause of the sensation, — the thing which by its presence is supposed to give rise to the sensation; the colored object, or the quality residing in that object, which we term its color. Berkeley is not, as Mr. Bailey supposes, bound to show that the sensation of color is "converted into the perception of an external object," since nobody is bound to prove a proposition which nobody can understand. Expressed in unequivocal language, what Mr. Bailey calls the perception of an object is simply a judgment of the intellect that an object is present. Berkeley is not called upon to show that the sensation of color can be "converted" into this judgment, because his theory requires no such conversion. It requires that the judgment should follow as an inference from the sensation; and Berkeley is bound to show that this is possible. And this he can do; since there is no law of mind more familiar than that by which, when two things have constantly been experienced together, we infer, from the presence of the one, the presence of the other.

Thus it is, that, from using the obscure word "perception" instead of the intelligible words "sensation" and "judgment" or "inference," our author leaves his antagonist unanswered, and triumphs over a shadow. It is true that Berkeley and Berkeley's adherents have set him the example of this misleading phraseology; but Mr. Bailey lives in a more accurate age, and should use language more accurately.

In the second section (we pass over some observations in the first, to which the answer is obvious), the author proceeds to inquire whether we naturally see things at different distances, or whether our perception by the eye of distance from us results (as Berkeley contends) from an association, formed by experience, between the usual signs of distance, and ideas of space originally derived from the touch.

And here Mr. Bailey has to confute an assertion of Berkeley, that "distance, of itself and immediately, cannot be seen: for, distance being a line directed endwise to the eye, it projects only one point in the fund of the eye; which point remains invariably the same, whether the distance be longer or shorter;" or, as Adam Smith has completed the expression of the idea, the distance of an object from the eye "must appear to it but as one point."

It is not easy to comprehend how the meaning of this argument can be unintelligible, we do not say to a person of Mr. Bailey's acquirements, but to any one who knows as much of optics as is now commonly taught in children's books. Our author, however, professes himself unable to understand it, but surmises that it proceeds on the fallacy of supposing that

we "see the rays of light" that come from the object ; which it is evident we do not.

The argument supposes no such thing. The argument is this : We cannot see any thing which is not painted on our retina ; and we see things alike or unlike, according as they are painted on the retina alike or unlike. The distance between an object to our right and an object to our left is a line presented sideways, and is therefore painted on our retina as a line : the distance of an object from us is a line presented endways, and is represented on the retina by a point. It seems obvious, therefore, that we must be able, by the eye alone, to discriminate between unequal distances of the former kind, but not of the latter. Unequal lines drawn across our sphere of vision, we can see to be unequal, because the lines which image them in the eye are also unequal. But the distances of objects from us are represented on our retina in all cases by single points ; and, all points being equal, all such distances must appear equal, or rather we are unable to see them in the character of distances at all.

This argument, which involves no premises but what all admit, does positively prove that distance from us cannot be seen in the way in which we see the distances (or rather apparent distances) of objects from one another ; namely, by the original powers of the sense of sight. Berkeley's argument proves conclusively, that distance from the eye is not seen, but inferred. It cannot be seen as other things are seen, because it projects no image on the retina : it must be seen indirectly ; that is, not seen, but judged of from signs, — namely, from those differences in the appearance of an object, whether

in respect of magnitude or color, which are physically consequent upon its being at a greater or a smaller distance.

And here, so far as concerns one principal part of the question at issue, the argument might close. It is demonstrated, that the distance of an object is not "perceived" directly, but by means of intermediate signs; not seen by the eye, but inferred by the mind. And this is not only the most essential, but the only paradoxical, part of Berkeley's theory.

It is true, there remains a supposition which our author may adopt; and which, from occasional expressions, it might be concluded that he is willing to adopt. He may give up the point of actually seeing distance; and admitting that we do not see it, but judge of it from evidence, he may maintain that the interpretation of that evidence is intuitive, and not the result of experience. He may say that we do not see an object to be farther off, but infer it to be so from its looking smaller; not, however, because we have heretofore observed that such is the case, but by a natural instinct, which precedes experience, and anticipates its results.

There are thus two possible forms of our author's doctrine. He may affirm that we are apprised of distance through the eye by actually seeing it: or he may say, with Berkeley, that remoteness is not seen, but inferred from paleness of color, and diminution of apparent magnitude; but may differ from him by asserting that the inference is instinctive, instead of the slow result of gradual experience. The former doctrine is demonstrably false; the latter, not so: it may perhaps be refuted, but cannot be taxed with absurdity.



The author, however, from the imperfect way in which he has conceived the question, seems never to have finally made his choice between these two suppositions.\* When he draws near to close quarters (he never comes quite close), and is compelled to express himself with a nearer than usual approach to precision, his language seems to imply that the perception of distance from us is not a process of sense, but an instinctive inference of the mind. But he cannot have consciously elected this doctrine, to the exclusion of the other, or he would scarcely make the large use he does, for confirming his theory, of its supposed conformity to the "universal impressions of mankind." To those natural impressions, his doctrine, thus understood, is as repugnant as Berkeley's. Mankind, when they use their eyesight to estimate the distance of an object, do not fancy themselves to be interpreting signs: they are not conscious that they are judging by the apparent smallness of the object, and by the loss of brilliancy which it sustains from the intervening atmosphere. If their unreflecting opinion goes for any thing, it goes to prove that we actually *see* distance; for they are unaware of any difference between the process of seeing the distance of the tree from the house, and seeing the distance of the house from their eye.

If the author, abandoning his claim to have common prejudices on his side, should finally acquiesce in the opinion, that what he calls our perception of nearness and remoteness by the eye is an instinctive interpretation of those variations in color and apparent magni-

\* [Mr. Bailey has since explained, that he adhered to the theory of direct vision, and repudiated that of instinctive interpretation of signs.]

tude which really do accompany varieties of distance, his doctrine will then lie open to only one objection, — the superfluousness of assuming an instinct to account for that which knowledge derived from experience will so well explain. Long before a child gives evidence of distinguishing distances by the eye with any approach to accuracy, he has had time more than enough to learn from experience the correspondence between greater distance to the outstretched arm, and smaller magnitude to the eye. At any age at which a child is capable of forming expectations from past experience, he must have had experience of this correspondence, and must have learnt to ground expectations upon it.

Mr. Bailey next takes notice of the argument which Berkeley's followers have drawn from the effect of pictures, from the fact that things may be so represented on a flat surface as to deceive the sight. They conclude from this, that, though we appear to see solidity, we in truth only infer it from signs; because we equally appear to see it when the solidity is no longer present, provided the signs are. This argument, therefore, aims at proving no more than that what we call seeing solidity is inferring solidity; a proposition which, as we have already observed, our author could afford to admit. Nevertheless, he understands this argument no better than he understood the one which preceded it. He says it is "virtually arguing, that, because planes can be made to look solid, solid objects are originally seen plane. . . . Solid objects, they say, must be originally seen as plane, because they may be delineated on a plane surface so as to look solid:" which, as he justly says, would be an unwarranted inference.

But Mr. Bailey misconceives the scope of the argument to which he fancies that he is replying. The fact that a plane may be mistaken for a solid is not urged to show that a solid *must*, but only that it *may*, be seen originally as a plane. Since even a plane, so colored as to make the same image on the retina which a solid would make, is mistaken for a solid, without doubt an actual solid will be perceived to be such, even if it be seen in no other manner than as the plane is. The fact that we recognize a solid as a solid is no proof, that, so far as the mere eye is concerned, we do not see it as a plane; since a picture, which is certainly seen only as a plane, is yet recognized as a solid, and appears to the person himself to be seen as such.

We proceed to another of our author's arguments. If it were true, he says, that we originally see all objects in a party-colored plane, but afterwards find by experience that this visual appearance is uniformly connected with a tangible object, we should indeed associate the two ideas; but this subsequent association would not alter the original perception. If we before saw a party-colored plane, we should continue to see it. Though the idea of a tangible object would be uniformly suggested, the impression of sight which suggested it would in no wise be changed. As no touching or handling can make us see the images in a mirror to be on the surface, but we cannot help seeing them beyond it,—so if all objects, near and remote, appeared to the sight to be at the same distance, all the touching or feeling in the world could not make us see them to be at various distances.

Here, again, the author has permitted a set of indefinite phrases to intercept his view of the position which

he has undertaken to subvert. It is quite true, that no association between the sight and the touch will ever make us *see* any thing that the eyesight has not the power of showing us. If we originally see only a party-colored plane, no touching or handling will ever make us *see* any thing more. But touching and handling may well make us infer something more ; and, according to Berkeley's theory, this is all it needs to do. The very pith and marrow of the theory is, that what Mr. Bailey calls seeing things at various distances is, in truth, inferring them to be so, and that neither at first nor at last do we actually *see* any thing but the colors. Berkeley, therefore, is under no necessity of affirming, that experience or association alters the nature of our perceptions of sense. All that belongs to sense, according to him, remains the same : what experience does is to superadd to the impression of sense an instantaneous act of judgment.

In what we have already written, we have answered the essential part of so much of our author's argument, that we may forbear to follow him into the various modes of statement by which he endeavors to adapt his refutation to the varieties of Berkeley's language. The same radical misconception pervades them all, — that of representing Berkeley as pretending that a conception derived from touch is actually transmuted into a perception of sight. It is still, as before, the word "perception" which disguises from our author the point in issue. He cannot see, that what he calls a perception of sight is simply a judgment of the intellect, inferring from a sensation of sight the presence of an object. The idea of an object being an idea derived from touch, ideas of

touch are the foundation of this judgment of the intellect; but it is not therefore necessary to consider them as being, in any sense whatever of the term, "transmuted," either into a judgment or into a perception.

Mr. Bailey's next argument is the statement of a psychological fact, which, as a fact, is correct, and a necessary completion and explanation of the theory with which he imagines it to conflict. According to Berkeley's doctrine, says Mr. Bailey, what takes place, when we appear to ourselves to see distance, is merely a close and rapid suggestion of tangible distance, called up by certain visual appearances or signs; and the mind (as is its custom) does not dwell upon the sign, nor remember, even the next minute, that precise appearance of the object which indicated the distance, but rushes at once from the sign to the thing signified. And, accordingly, a person learning to draw finds it very difficult to recall accurately the visual appearance, or, even when the scene is before his eyes, to imitate on paper the apparent positions and figures, without ever altering them by the substitution of the real ones. So inveterate is the habit of neglecting the sign, and attending only to the thing signified, that it is a hard and difficult task to delineate objects as we see them: our tendency is always to delineate them as we know them to be.

Now, if these doctrines be true, argues our author; if visible appearances are mere signs, which the mind rapidly glides over, and hurries to the tactual perceptions with which they are associated, — we ought surely to be very distinctly conscious of the tactual reminiscences supposed to be thus suggested. Yet the fact

is, that when we look at objects, and judge of their positions and distances, we have so little consciousness of any tactual ideas, that it is almost questionable whether any are suggested at all. It is, in fact, with great difficulty that we recall this particular class of tactual impressions. Our ideas of tangible distance, form, and magnitude, instead of being peculiarly distinct, are peculiarly vague and shadowy; for the simple reason, that we are not in the habit of attending to those particular sensations of touch. And, accordingly, our consciousness testifies, that, when we correct an erroneous visual impression of distance, we do so by comparing and collating it, not with tactual impressions, but with visual impressions received under different circumstances. When, in looking along an avenue of trees, the more remote of the trees appear to my eye to be close together; and when I correct this impression, and judge them to be farther apart than they appear, — the thought which I recall is not the idea of a tangible space, but the recollection of the visible space which I saw intervening between them on some nearer view, or which I have seen to lie between the adjacent trees of other similar avenues.

In this argument, to which we have endeavored to do no injustice in the mode of stating it, the facts alleged are indisputable. It is true, that our ordinary processes of thought and judgment respecting outward objects are carried on, not by means of tactual ideas, but of visual ideas, which have acquired a tactual signification; and that this extensive supersession of the function of tactual ideas renders many of them dim, confused, and difficult to be recalled. But these facts,

in themselves interesting and worthy of notice, are of no avail to prove that the visual ideas, which thus become our main symbols of tangible objects, have their tactual signification naturally, or obtain it from any other source than experience. At the age at which a child first learns that a diminution in brightness and in apparent magnitude implies increase of distance, the child's ideas of tangible extension and magnitude are not faint and faded, but fresh and vigorous. As for the subsequent fact, that, when the suggesting power of the sign has been often exercised, our consciousness, not only of the sign itself, but of much of what is signified by the sign, becomes much less acute, so accomplished a metaphysician as Mr. Bailey cannot be ignorant that this is the nature of all signs. It will not, for example, be asserted, that the words of any language are significant by nature, or derive their power of suggesting ideas from any cause but association alone; yet nothing can be more notorious, than that a word with which we are very familiar is heard or uttered, and does its work as a sign, with the faintest possible suggestion of most of the sensible ideas which compose its meaning. For example, the word "country:" a politician may reason, or an orator may expatiate, with the utmost cogency and effect, on the interests of the country, the prospects of the country; but, in doing this, have they distinctly present to the mind's eye the corn-fields and meadows, the work-shops and farm-houses, the thronged manufactories and family circles, which are the real concrete signification of the word? Assuredly not: words, as used on common occasions, suggest no more of the ideas habitually asso-

ciated with them, than the smallest portion that will enable the mind to do what those common occasions require; and it is only to persons of more than ordinary vividness of imagination that the names of things ever recall more than the meagrest outline of even their own conceptions of the things.

Now, if this be true of words, which are conventional signs, it is not less true of natural signs, such as our sensations of sight, which derive their power of suggestion, not from convention, but from always occurring in conjunction with the things which they suggest. When once the visual appearances from long experience suggest the tactual impressions with extreme readiness and familiarity, it would be contrary to all we know of association to suppose that they will continue to suggest them with the original vivacity and force. As the mind, without attending to the sign, runs on to the thing signified; so does it also, without attending to the thing signified, run on to whatever else that thing suggests. Those vivid sensations of the touch and of the muscular frame from which the infant learned his first ideas of distance, would, when the necessity had ceased for actively attending to them, be more and more dimly recalled, while enough only would be distinctly suggested to enable the mind to go on to what it has next to do. The amount of distinct suggestion, and its precise nature, probably differ in different individuals; and in each the visual sign suggests, not so much the tangible distance, as the measure by which, with that person, tangible distances are accustomed to be estimated. In our own experience, we should say, that, when we look at an object to judge of its distance



from us, the idea suggested is commonly that of the length of time, or the quantity of motion, which would be requisite for reaching to the object if near to us, or walking up to it if at a distance.

The indistinctness, therefore, of our ideas of tactual extension and magnitude, and the fact of our carrying on most of our mental processes by means of their visual signs, without distinctly recalling the tactual impressions upon which our ideas of extension and magnitude were originally grounded, is no argument against Berkeley's theory, but is exactly what, from the laws of association, we should expect to happen, supposing that theory to be true. And our author has failed, by this as much as by his other arguments, to strike an effective blow at the theory.

We may here close our examination of the controversial, and properly argumentative, part of the book. The remainder of it is an attempt to show, by actual observation, that distances are distinguished by the eye before there has been time to form any association between the sight and the touch, and even before the sense of touch has been sufficiently exercised to be capable of yielding accurate ideas.

The facts adduced are of three kinds, — relating either to human infants ; to the young of the lower animals ; or to persons born blind, and afterwards restored to sight.

Our author's facts relating to human infants are singularly inconclusive. They are chiefly intended to show that the sense of sight in a child is developed earlier than the sense of touch ; because a child recognizes persons and objects by the sight, when his expertness in using his hands, so as to acquire tactual ideas, is still of

the very lowest order. From this, Mr. Bailey infers, or seems to infer, that the infant judges of objects by the sense of sight before he has sensations of touch whereby to judge of them. It is singular that so able a thinker should not have adverted to the fact, that the child may experience sensations of touch from two sources; namely, either from the objects which he touches, or from those which touch him. A child six months old is not very skilful in handling objects so as to acquire an accurate notion of their distance and shape; but persons and things are continually touching the child, and seldom without his experiencing simultaneously some peculiar visual appearance. It cannot, therefore, be long before he associates at least those contacts which are pleasurable or painful, with the corresponding visual sensations; and, when this association is formed, he will, on seeing the visual appearances, give signs of intelligence; not from recognizing the object,—for, as an object, there is not a shadow of proof that he yet recognizes it,—but simply because the sensation of sight excites the expectation of the accustomed pleasure or pain. That any thing beyond this takes place in an infant's mind, at an age at which it has not yet acquired tactual notions of distance and magnitude, Mr. Bailey has not proved, and would find it difficult to prove.

The facts relating to the young of the lower animals are more to the point, and have been long felt to be a real stumbling-block in the way of the theory.

“It is manifest,” says Mr. Bailey, “by the actions of many young animals, that they see external objects as soon as they are born, and before they can possibly have derived any assistance from their powers of touch or muscular feeling.

The duckling makes to the water as soon as it has left its shell; the lamb moves about as soon as dropped; the young turtles and crocodiles, says Sir Humphry Davy, hatched without care of parents, run to the water; the crocodile bites at a stick, if it be presented to it, the moment it is hatched." Again: "Their running about, their snatching at objects presented to them as soon as born, their seeking the teats of the dam, their leaping from one spot to another with the greatest precision, all show, not only that they can see objects to be at different distances, but that there is a natural consent of action between their limbs and their eyes; that they can proportion their muscular efforts to visible distances."

It is asserted, and we know of no reason to doubt the fact, that chickens will pick up corn, without difficulty, as soon as they are hatched.

These are strong facts; and though we cannot confirm them from our own knowledge, still, as they are denied by no one, we presume they must be received as unquestionable. Some of the strongest adherents of Berkeley's doctrine, particularly Dugald Stewart and Brown, have felt compelled by these facts to allow, that, in many of the lower animals, the perception of distance by the eye is connate and instinctive. In this admission, these philosophors saw no inconsistency; it being an acknowledged truth, that brutes have many instincts of which man is reduced to supply the place by acquired knowledge. Mr. Bailey, however, goes further, and says here is proof that the eye is at least an organ capable of a direct and intuitive perception of distance. Here, therefore, is at all events a complete refutation of Berkeley, who asserts that such a direct perception is organically impossible.

This is one of the passages which look as if our author had never quite settled with himself whether the "perception of distance" by the eye is a real function of that organ, or is that very process of interpreting visible signs which Berkeley contends for, except that it is instinctive, instead of being the result of experience. It is against the former hypothesis only that the argument of Berkeley, which Mr. Bailey refers to, is directed. To refute him, therefore, it would be necessary to show, not only that animals can distinguish distance as soon as they are born, but that they distinguish it by the sight itself, and not by interpretation of signs. Yet the other hypothesis is the one which, in order to treat our author fairly, we are obliged to suppose him to adopt.

If the eye of a brute is a different kind of organ from a human eye, there is no reasoning from one to the other: brutes may be capable of seeing distance and solidity; and yet this will be no reason for supposing that men are capable. But if in a brute, as in a man, it be a necessary condition of vision, that an image corresponding to the object should be formed on the retina, then in a brute, as in a man, it is impossible that two lines should seem of unequal length, which are both alike represented on the retina by points. There will be no resource, either in man or beast, for judging of remoteness, except from difference in the degrees of brightness and of visible magnitude; and the only doubt will be, whether these natural signs are interpreted instinctively, or by virtue of previous experience.

Now, if brutes have really an instinct for interpreting these appearances; if they are intuitively capable

of drawing, without experience, the inferences which experience would warrant, — we allow it is physiologically probable that some vestige of a similar instinct exists in human beings; although, as in many other cases, the instinctive property, which might perhaps be observable in idiots, is overruled and superseded by the superior force of that rational faculty which grounds its judgments upon experience. But, in truth, our knowledge of the mental operations of animals is too imperfect to enable us to affirm positively that they have this instinct. We know to a certain extent the external acts of animals; but know not from what inward promptings, or on what outward indications, those acts are performed. For example, as a judicious critic in the "Spectator" newspaper has remarked, some of the motions which are supposed to show that young animals can see distance immediately after birth are performed equally by those which are born blind: kittens and puppies seek the teat as well as calves and lambs. We are not aware if the experiment was ever tried whether a blind duckling will run to the water: it would not be more surprising than many facts in the history of the lower animals which are well known to be true. Those animals have to us an inexplicable facility both of finding and of selecting the objects which their wants require, without, as far as we can perceive, any sufficient opportunities of experience. But it is a question which we should like to see examined by a good observer, to what extent it is their eyesight which guides them to the performance of these wonders. At all events, man has not these same facilities: man cannot build in hexagons by an instinctive faculty, though bees can.

We do not wish to evade a question which we are unable to solve; or to blink the fact, that the case of the lower animals is the most serious difficulty which the theory of Berkeley has to encounter. But we maintain that it is a difficulty only, not a refutation; and that, even granting the full extent of what is contended for, the theory would still be practically true for human beings. Mr. Bailey allows that infants do not manifest that early perception of distance which some animals do: he imputes this, plausibly enough, to the comparative immaturity of their organs at the period of birth. But before the time when, according to him, the organs have attained sufficient maturity for manifesting this original power, experience has furnished impressions and formed associations, which, without supposing any such power, will account for all which the eyes can do in the way of observation; and there is ample evidence that our judgments of outward things from visual signs are practically, throughout life, regulated by these acquired associations.

The facts which relate to young children and the young of the lower animals being disposed of, there remain those derived from persons born blind, and relieved from blindness at a mature age. These, if well authenticated, would be the most valuable facts of all for the human species. They exhibit to us, in the very act of learning to see, not children or brutes, but persons capable of observing and describing their impressions, and whose judgments of objects from touch are already accurate and steady. It is a disagreeable reflection, to how great an extent these rare and valuable opportunities have been lost; how slightly and carelessly cases so interesting to science have been observed;

and how scanty and insufficient is the information which has been recorded concerning them.

The best known case, that of the youth who was couched by Cheselden, has always been deemed strongly confirmatory of Berkeley's doctrine. Mr. Bailey has however attempted, we cannot think with any success, to maintain the contrary. Cheselden's patient said, that all objects seemed to touch his eyes, as what he felt did his skin. There has been much discussion (in which our author takes an active part) as to what the boy may have meant by touching his eyes; we think, quite needlessly. That the objects touched him was obviously a mere supposition, which he made because it was with his eyes that he perceived them. From his experience of touch, perception of an object, and contact with it, were, no doubt, indissolubly associated in his mind. But he would scarcely have said that all objects seemed to touch his eyes, if some of them had appeared farther off than others. The case, therefore, as far as any thing can be concluded from one instance, seems to prove completely that we are at first incapable of seeing things at unequal distances. Our author curiously argues, that the boy might have expressed himself as he did without regarding all visible objects as equally near; for, says he, the boy compared his visual impressions to impressions of touch; and we do not consider all tangible objects as equally near. True, we do not; but, if we were to say that all objects seemed simultaneously to touch our hand, it would require some ingenuity to reconcile this assertion with the fact, that we were, at that very moment, perceiving them to be at different distances from it.

Another specimen of our author's power of explaining away evidence is to be found in his remark, that, in the whole of Cheselden's narrative, "there is nothing from which we can learn or infer, not a whisper of evidence to prove, that the boy's subsequent perceptions of visible distance had been acquired *by means of the touch.*"

What thinks Mr. Bailey of this passage, quoted by himself? —

"He knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude; but upon being told what things were, whose form he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe, that he might know them again: but, having too many objects to learn at once, he forgot many of them; and (as he said) at first he learned to know, and again forgot, a thousand things in a day. One particular only, though it may appear trifling, I will relate. Having often forgot which was the cat, and which the dog, he was ashamed to ask: but, catching the cat (which he knew by feeling), he was observed to look at her steadfastly; and then, setting her down, said, 'So, puss, I shall know you another time.'"

Mr. Bailey will not wish to shelter himself under the subterfuge, that the process of learning to see, which Cheselden here so graphically describes, has reference to form only, and not to distance. Cheselden exhibits the boy actively engaged in teaching himself by the touch to judge of forms by the eye: and in this process he could not avoid learning also to judge of distances, — much more rapidly, indeed, than of forms, the ideas concerned being much simpler.

After this example, the reader may dispense with our



entering into the details of five other cases which our author discusses. Some of these cases are more, others less, favorable in appearance to Berkeley's theory ; but, as our author himself remarks, they all bear evidence that the observers were not duly aware of the psychological difficulties of the problem. The point which Mr. Bailey most dwells on as conclusive in his favor, is, that two of the patients could distinguish, by the unassisted eye, whether an object was brought nearer or carried farther from them. This, indeed, would be decisive of the question, if the experiments had been fair ones. But, in one of these cases, the patient was of mature years, and the trial not made till the eighteenth day after the operation ; by which time a middle-aged woman might well have acquired the experience necessary for distinguishing so simple a phenomenon. In the other of the two cases, the patient, a boy seven years old, had been capable, before the operation, of distinguishing colors "when they were very strong, and held close to the eye ;" and had probably, therefore, had the capacity of observing, antecedently to the operation, that colors grow fainter when the colored object is removed further off.

On the whole, then, it will probably be the opinion of the philosophical reader, that neither by his facts nor by his arguments has Mr. Bailey thrown any new light upon the question, but has left Berkeley's theory precisely as he found it ; subject, as it has always been, to the acknowledged difficulty arising from the motions of young animals, but otherwise unshaken, and to all appearance unshakable.

Mr. Bailey having published a reply\* to the preceding criticism, it is right to subjoin the following —

### REJOINDER TO MR. BAILEY'S REPLY. †

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IN this pamphlet, Mr. Bailey replies to our article of last October, and to a paper in "Blackwood's Magazine" on the same subject. Between Mr. Bailey and the writer in "Blackwood" we are not called upon to interfere. Of what he has said in answer to our own comments, our respect for him, as well as the scientific interest of the subject, compel us to take some notice; but we cannot venture to inflict upon our readers that detailed analysis of his arguments which would be necessary to satisfy him that we had duly considered them. We prefer resting our case on what we have already written, and on a comparison between that and what is offered in reply to it. We are really afraid, lest, in any attempt to state the substance of Mr. Bailey's arguments, we should unwittingly leave out something which perhaps forms an essential part of them; so little do we feel capable of comprehending what it is which gives them the conclusiveness they possess in his eyes. And it is the more desirable that the reader should not take our word respecting Mr. Bailey's opinions, as it appears,

\* A Letter to a Philosopher, in Reply to some recent Attempts to vindicate Berkeley's Theory of Vision, and in further Elucidation of its Unsoundness.

† Westminster Review, May, 1843.

that, on one important point, we have, in sheer love of justice and courtesy to Mr. Bailey, misrepresented them.

We remarked that a dissentient from Berkeley's doctrine might adopt either of two theories: he might assert that we actually *see* distance, which is one doctrine; or he might admit that we only *infer* the distance of an object from the diminution of its apparent size and apparent brilliancy, but might say that this inference is not made from experience, but by instinct or intuition. We surmised that Mr. Bailey was in a state of indecision between these two theories, but with a leaning towards the latter. In this, it seems we were wrong; for he not only holds steadily to the former of the two doctrines, but finds it "inexplicable how any one of honesty and intelligence" could so far misunderstand him as to imagine otherwise, "except on the supposition of greater haste than was compatible with due examination." We can assure Mr. Bailey, that our mistake — since mistake it was — arose solely from an honest desire to do him justice. Of the two opinions, we, in all candor, attributed to him the one which appeared to us least unreasonable, and most difficult satisfactorily to refute. It would have abridged our labor very much if we had thought ourselves at liberty to ascribe to him the opinion he now avows. That opinion we thought, and continue to think, palpably untenable, being inconsistent with admitted facts; while the other, from the nature of the case, can only be combated by negative evidence.

The notion that distance from the eye can be directly seen, needs, we conceive, no other refutation than

Berkeley's. We can see nothing except in so far as it is represented on our retina; and things which are represented on our retina exactly alike will be seen alike. The distances of all objects from the eye, being lines directed endwise to the retina, can only project themselves upon it by single points; that is to say, exactly alike: therefore they are seen exactly alike. This, which is Berkeley's argument, Mr. Bailey, in his pamphlet, disposes of by saying that it supposes the distances to be "material or physical lines," since "imaginary or hypothetical lines can project no points on the retina." We must again reiterate our fear of misrepresenting Mr. Bailey; for we can scarcely suppose him to mean (what he seems to say) that only *bodies* can be represented on the retina, and not the blank spaces between bodies; or else that we indeed see bodies when, and only when, they are imaged on the retina, but see the spaces between them without any such optical equivalent. The fact surely is, that we see bodies and their distances by precisely the same mechanism. We see two stars, if they are imaged on the retina, and not otherwise: we see the interval between those stars, if there is an interval on the retina between the two images; and, if there is no such interval, we see it not. Now, as the interval between an object and our eye has not any interval answering to it on the retina, we do not see it. Surely this argument does not depend upon an implied assumption, that the intervals between objects are physical lines joining them.

This is Mr. Bailey's answer to one of our arguments. Whether he has succeeded any better in replying to

the remainder of them, we must leave it to others to judge.

Mr. Bailey, in his reply, insists very much on a point which we passed over in our former article, — the confirmation which he imagines his theory to derive from Mr. Wheatstone's discoveries respecting binocular vision, exhibited in the phenomena of the stereoscope. We think Mr. Bailey must admit, on further consideration, that these phenomena (as he himself says of Cheselden's observations) \* are equally consistent with both theories. The stereoscope makes us see, or appear to see, solidity: it makes us look upon a flat picture of an object, and have, more completely than we ever had before, the semblance of seeing the object in three dimensions. But how is this done? Merely by imitating on a plane, more exactly than was ever done before, the precise sensations of color and visible form which we habitually have when a solid object, a body in three

\* See page 59 of the pamphlet. Without arguing this point with our author, we will, however, take note of an acknowledgment here made by him, which is of some importance. Although the boy couched by Cheselden could, according to Mr. Bailey, see distances, without any previous process of comparing his visual sensations with actual experience, Mr. Bailey admits that he still had to go through this very process of comparison before he could know that the distances which he saw corresponded with those he previously knew by touch. We do not wish to lay more stress upon this admission than belongs to it; but it seems to us very like a surrender of the whole question. If the boy did not at once perceive whether the distances he saw were or were not the same with those he already knew, then we do not really see distances. If we saw distances, we should not need to learn by experience what distances we saw. We should at once recognize an object to be at the distance we saw it at, and should confidently expect that the indications of touch would correspond. This expectation might be ill-grounded, for we might see the distances incorrectly: but then the result would be error; not perplexity, and inability to judge at all, as was the case with Cheselden's patient.

dimensions, is presented to us. The stereoscope produces a more complete illusion than a mere picture, because it does what no previous picture ever did, — it allows for, and imitates, the two *different* sets of ocular appearances which we receive from an object very near to us when we look at it with both our eyes. If either theory could derive support from this experiment, it would surely be that which supposes our perceptions of solidity to be inferences rapidly drawn from visual impressions confined to two dimensions. But we do not insist upon this, as we deem the argument from pictures, in any of its forms, only valid to prove, not the truth of Berkeley's theory, but its sufficiency to explain the phenomena; or, as we before expressed it, that a solid *may*, not that it *must*, be seen originally as a plane.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Bailey takes frequent opportunities of animadverting on the tone of our article, in a manner evincing at least as much sensitiveness to what he deems hostile criticism, as is at all compatible with the character of a philosopher. We were so entirely unconscious of having laid ourselves open to this kind of reproof, as to have flattered ourselves that the style and tone of our criticism on a single opinion of Mr. Bailey bore indubitable marks of the unfeigned respect which we entertain for his general powers; nor are we aware of having shown any other "bluntness," "confidence," or "arrogance," than are implied in thinking ourselves right, and, by consequence, Mr. Bailey wrong. We certainly did not feel ourselves required, by consideration for him, to state our difference of opinion with pretended hesitation. We should

not have written on the subject, unless we had been able to form a decided opinion on it: and, having done so, to have expressed that opinion otherwise than decidedly would have been cowardice, not modesty; it would have been sacrificing our conviction of truth to fear of offence. To dispute the soundness of a man's doctrines and the conclusiveness of his arguments may always be interpreted as an assumption of superiority over him: true courtesy, however, between thinkers, is not shown by refraining from this sort of assumption, but by tolerating it in one another; and we claim from Mr. Bailey this tolerance, as we, on our part, sincerely and cheerfully concede to him the like.

## MICHELET'S HISTORY OF FRANCE.\*

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IT has of late been a frequent remark among Continental thinkers, that the tendencies of the age set strongly in the direction of historical inquiry, and that history is destined to assume a new aspect from the genius and labors of the minds now devoted to its improvement. The anticipation must appear at least premature to an observer in England, confining his observation to his own country. Whatever may be the merits, in some subordinate respects, of such histories as the last twenty years have produced among us, they are in general distinguished by no essential character from the historical writings of the last century. No signs of a new school have been manifested in them: they will be affirmed by no one to constitute an era, or even prefigure the era which is to come, save that the "shadow of its coming" rested for an instant on the lamented Dr. Arnold at the close of his career; while Mr. Carlyle has shown a signal example, in his "French Revolution," of the epic tone and pictorial coloring which may be given to literal truth, when materials are copious, and when the writer combines the laborious accuracy of a chronicler with the vivid imagination of a poet.

But whoever desires to know either the best which

\* Edinburgh Review, January, 1844.



has been accomplished, or what the most advanced minds think it possible to accomplish, for the renovation of historical studies, must look to the Continent; and by the Continent we mean, of course, in an intellectual sense, Germany and France. That there are historians in Germany, our countrymen have at last discovered. The first two volumes of Niebuhr's unfinished work, though the least attractive part to ordinary tastes, are said to have had more readers, or at least more purchasers, in English than in their native language. Of the remaining volume, a translation has lately appeared, by a different but a highly competent hand. Schlosser, if not read, has at least been heard of, in England; and one of Ranke's works has been twice translated: we would rather that two of them had been translated once. But, though French books are supposed to be sufficiently legible in England without translation, the English public is not aware, that, both in historical speculations and in the importance of her historical writings, France, in the present day, far surpasses Germany. What reason induces the educated part of our countrymen to ignore, in so determined a manner, the more solid productions of the most active national mind in Europe, and to limit their French readings to M. de Balzac and M. Eugène Sue, there would be some difficulty in precisely determining: perhaps it is the ancient dread of French infidelity; perhaps the ancient contempt of French frivolity and superficiality. If it be the former, we can assure them that there is no longer ground for such a feeling: if the latter, we must be permitted to doubt that there ever was. It is unnecessary to discuss whether, as some affirm, a

strong religious "revival" is taking place in France, and whether such a phenomenon, if real, is likely to be permanent. There is at least a decided re-action against the irreligion of the last age. The Voltairian philosophy is looked upon as a thing of the past: one of its most celebrated assailants has been heard to lament that it has no living representative sufficiently considerable to perform the functions of a "constitutional opposition" against the reigning philosophic doctrines. The present French thinkers, whether receiving Christianity or not as a divine revelation, in no way feel themselves called upon to be unjust to it as a fact in history. There are men, who, not disguising their own unbelief, have written deeper and finer things in vindication of what religion has done for mankind, than have sufficed to found the reputation of some of its most admired defenders. If they have any historical prejudice on the subject, it is in favor of the priesthood. They leave the opinions of David Hume on ecclesiastical history to the exclusive patronage (we are sorry to say) of Protestant writers in Great Britain.

With respect to the charge so often made against French historians, of superficiality and want of research, it is a strange accusation against the country which produced the Benedictines. France has at all times possessed a class of studious and accurate *érudits*, as numerous as any other country except Germany; and her popular writers are not more superficial than our own. Voltaire gave false views of history in many respects, but not falser than Hume's: Thiers is inaccurate, but less so than Sir Walter Scott. France has

done more for even English history than England has. The very first complete history of England, and to this day not wholly superseded by any other, was the production of a French emigrant, Rapin de Thoyras. The histories and historical memoirs of the Commonwealth period, never yet collected in our own country, have been translated and published at Paris in an assembled form, under the superintendence of M. Guizot; to whom also we owe the best history, both in thought and in composition, of the times of Charles I. The reigns of the last two Stuarts have been written, with the mind of a statesman and the hand of a vigorous writer, by Armand Carrel, in his "Histoire de la Contre-révolution en Angleterre;" and at greater length, with much research and many new facts, by M. Mazure. To call these writings, and numerous others which have lately appeared in France, superficial, would only prove an entire unacquaintance with them.

Among the French writers now laboring in the historical field, we must at present confine ourselves to those who have narrated, as well as philosophized; who have written history, as well as written *about* history. Were we to include in our survey those general speculations which aim at connecting together the facts of universal history, we could point to some which we deem even more instructive, because of a more comprehensive and far-reaching character, than any which will now fall under our notice. Restricting ourselves, however, to historians in the received sense of the word, and, among them, to those who have done enough to be regarded as the chiefs and representatives of the new tendency, we should say, that the three great historical

minds of France, in our time, are Thierry, Guizot, and the writer whose name, along with that of his most important production, stands at the beginning of the present article.

To assist our appreciation of these writers, and of the improved ideas on the use and study of history, which their writings exemplify and diffuse, we may observe that there are three distinct stages in historical inquiry.

The type of the first stage is Larcher, the translator of Herodotus, who, as remarked by Paul Louis Courier, carries with him to the durbar of Darius the phraseology of the Court of Louis Quatorze;\* and,

\* "Figurez-vous un truchement qui, parlant au sénat de Rome pour le paysan du Danube, au lieu de ce début, —

'Romains, et vous Sénat, assis pour m'écouter,' —

commencerait: Messieurs, puisque vous me faites l'honneur de vouloir bien entendre votre humble serviteur, j'aurai celui de vous dire. . . . Voilà exactement ce que font les interprètes d'Hérodote. La version de Larcher, pour ne parler que de celle qui est la plus connue, ne s'écarte jamais de cette civilité: on ne saurait dire que ce soit le laquais de Madame de Sévigné; auquel elle compare les traducteurs d'alors; car celui-là rendait dans son langage bas, le style de la cour, tandis que Larcher, au contraire, met en style de la cour ce qu'a dit l'homme d'Halicarnasse. Hérodote, dans Larcher, ne parle que de princes, de princesses, de seigneurs, et de gens de qualité; ces princes montent sur le trône, s'emparent de la couronne, ont une cour, des ministres et de grands officiers, faisant, comme on peut croire, le bonheur des sujets; pendant que les princesses, les dames de la cour, accordent leurs faveurs à ces jeunes seigneurs. Or est-il qu'Hérodote ne se doute jamais de ce que nous appelons princes, trône et couronne, ni de ce qu'à l'académie on nomme faveurs des dames et bonheur des sujets. Chez lui, les dames, les princesses mènent boire leurs vaches, ou celles du roi leur père, à la fontaine voisine, trouvent là des jeunes gens, et font quelque sottise, toujours exprimée dans l'auteur avec le mot propre: on est esclave ou libre, mais on n'est point sujet dans Hérodote. . . . Larcher ne nommera pas le boulanger de Crésus, le palefrenier de Cyrus, le chaudronnier Macistos; il dit grand panetier, écuyer, armurier, avertissant en note que cela est plus noble." — *Prospectus d'une Traduction Nouvelle d'Hérodote, Œuvres de P. L. Courier*, iii. 262.

nowise behind him, an English translator of the "Anabasis," who renders *ἄνδρες στρατιῶται* by "gentlemen of the army." The character of this school is to transport present feelings and notions back into the past, and refer all ages and forms of human life to the standard of that in which the writer himself lives. Whatever cannot be translated into the language of their own time, whatever they cannot represent to themselves by some fancied modern equivalent, is nothing to them, calls up no ideas in their minds at all. They cannot

For another specimen, we may instance the Abbé Velly, the most popular writer of French history in the last century. We quote from M. Thierry's third Letter on the History of France:—

"S'agit-il d'exprimer la distinction que la conquête des barbares établissait entre eux et les vaincus, distinction grave et triste, par laquelle la vie d'un indigène n'était estimée, d'après le taux des amendes, qu'à la moitié du prix mis à celle de l'étranger, ce sont de pures préférences de cour, *les faveurs de nos rois* s'adressent surtout aux vainqueurs. S'agit-il de présenter le tableau de ces grandes assemblées, où tous les hommes de race Germanique se rendaient en armes, où chacun était consulté depuis le premier jusqu'au dernier; l'Abbé Velly nous parle d'une espèce de *parlement ambulatoire* et des *cours pl'nières*, qui étaient (après la chasse) *une partie des amusemens de nos rois*. 'Nos rois,' ajoute l'aimable abbé, 'ne se trouvèrent bientôt plus en état de donner ces superbes fêtes. On peut dire que le règne des Carlovingiens fut celui des cours plénières. . . . Il y eut cependant toujours des fêtes à la cour; mais, avec plus de galanterie, plus de politesse, plus de goût, on n'y retrouva ni cette grandeur ni cette richesse.'

"'Hilderic,' dit Grégoire de Tours, 'regnant sur la nation des Franks et se livrant à une extrême dissolution, se prit à abuser de leurs filles; et eux, indignés de cela, le destituèrent de la royauté. Informé, en outre, qu'ils voulaient le mettre à mort, il partit et s'en alla en Thuringe.' Ce récit est d'un écrivain qui vivait un siècle après l'événement. Voici maintenant les paroles de l'Abbé Velly, qui se vante, dans sa préface, de puiser aux sources anciennes, et de peindre exactement les mœurs, les usages, et les coutumes: 'Childéric fut un prince à grandes aventures; . . . c'était l'homme le mieux fait de son royaume. Il avait de l'esprit, du courage; mais né avec un cœur tendre, il s'abandonnait trop à l'amour: ce fut la cause de sa perte. Les seigneurs Français, aussi sensibles à l'outrage que leurs femmes l'avaient été aux charmes de ce prince, se liguèrent pour le détrôner. Contraint de céder à leur fureur, il se retira en Allemagne.'"

imagine any thing different from their own everyday experience. They assume, that words mean the same thing to a monkish chronicler as to a modern member of Parliament. If they find the term *rex* applied to Clovis or Clotaire, they already talk of "the French monarchy," or "the kingdom of France." If, among a tribe of savages newly escaped from the woods, they find mention of a council of leading men, or an assembled multitude giving its sanction to some matter of general concernment, their imagination jumps to a system of free institutions, and a wise contrivance of constitutional balances and checks. If, at other times, they find the chief killing and plundering without this sanction, they just as promptly figure to themselves an acknowledged despotism. In this manner they antedate not only modern ideas, but the essential characters of the modern mind; and imagine their ancestors to be very like their next neighbors, saving a few eccentricities, occasioned by being still Pagans or Catholics, by having no *habeas-corpus* act, and no Sunday schools. If an historian of this stamp takes a side in controversy, and passes judgment upon actions or personages that have figured in history, he applies to them, in the crudest form, the canons of some modern party or creed. If he is a Tory, and his subject is Greece, every thing Athenian must be cried down; and Philip and Dionysius must be washed white as snow, lest Pericles and Demosthenes should not be sufficiently black. If he be a Liberal, Cæsar and Cromwell, and all usurpers similar to them, are "damned to everlasting fame." Is he a disbeliever of revelation? a short-sighted, narrow-minded Julian becomes his pattern of a prince; and the

heroes and martyrs of Christianity, objects of scornful pity. If he is of the Church of England, Gregory VII. must be an ambitious impostor, because Leo X. was a self-indulgent voluptuary; John Knox nothing but a coarse-minded fanatic, because the historian does not like John Wesley. Humble as our estimate must be of this kind of writers, it would be unjust to forget that even *their* mode of treating history is an improvement upon the uninquiring credulity which contented itself with copying or translating the ancient authorities, without ever bringing the writer's own mind in contact with the subject. It is better to conceive Demosthenes even under the image of Anacharsis Clootz, than not as a living being at all, but a figure in a puppet-show, of which Plutarch is the showman; and Mitford, so far, is a better historian than Rollin. He does give a sort of reality to historical personages: he ascribes to them passions and purposes, which, though not those of their age or position, are still human; and enables us to form a tolerably distinct, though in general an exceedingly false, notion of their qualities and circumstances. This is a first step; and, that step made, the reader, once in motion, is not likely to stop there.

Accordingly, the second stage of historical study attempts to regard former ages, not with the eye of a modern, but, as far as possible, with that of a cotemporary; to realize a true and living picture of the past time, clothed in its circumstances and peculiarities. This is not an easy task: the knowledge of any amount of dry generalities, or even of the practical life and business of his own time, goes a very little way to qualify a writer for it. He needs some of the charac-

teristics of the poet. He has to "body forth the forms of things unknown." He must have the faculty to see, in the ends and fragments which are preserved of some element of the past, the consistent whole to which they once belonged; to discern, in the individual fact which some monument hands down, or to which some chronicler testifies, the general, and for that very reason unrecorded, facts which it presupposes. Such gifts of imagination he must possess; and, what is rarer still, he must forbear to abuse them. He must have the conscience and self-command to affirm no more than can be vouched for, or deduced by legitimate inference from what is vouched for. With the genius for producing a great historical romance, he must have the virtue to add nothing to what can be proved to be true. What wonder if so rare a combination is not often realized?

Realized, of course, in its ideal perfection, it never is; but many now aim at it, and some approach it, according to the measure of their faculties. Of the sagacity which detects the meaning of small things, and drags to light the forgotten elements of a gone-by state of society, from scattered evidences which the writers themselves who recorded them did not understand, the world has now, in Niebuhr, an imperishable model. The reproduction of past events in the colors of life, and with all the complexity and bustle of a real scene, can hardly be carried to a higher pitch than by Mr. Carlyle. But to find a school of writers, and among them several of the first rank, who systematically direct their aims towards this ideal of history, we must look to the French historians of the present day.



There is yet a third and the highest stage of historical investigation, in which the aim is not simply to compose histories, but to construct a science of history. In this view, the whole of the events which have befallen the human race, and the states through which it has passed, are regarded as a series of phenomena, produced by causes, and susceptible of explanation. All history is conceived as a progressive chain of causes and effects; or (by an apter metaphor) as a gradually unfolding web, in which every fresh part that comes to view is a prolongation of the part previously unrolled, whether we can trace the separate threads from the one into the other, or not. The facts of each generation are looked upon as one complex phenomenon, caused by those of the generation preceding, and causing, in its turn, those of the next in order. That these states must follow one another according to some law, is considered certain: how to read that law is deemed the fundamental problem of the science of history. To find on what principles, derived from the nature of man and the laws of the outward world, each state of society and of the human mind produced that which came after it; and whether there can be traced any order of production sufficiently definite to show what future states of society may be expected to emanate from the circumstances which exist at present, — is the aim of historical philosophy in its third stage.

This ultimate and highest attempt must, in the order of nature, follow; not precede, that last described: for, before we can trace the filiation of states of society one from another, we must rightly understand and clearly conceive them, each apart from the rest. Ac-

cordingly, this greatest achievement is rather a possibility to be one day realized, than an enterprise in which any great progress has yet been made. But of the little yet done in this direction, by far the greater part has hitherto been done by French writers. They have made more hopeful attempts than any one else, and have more clearly pointed out the path: they are the real harbingers of the dawn of historical science.

Dr. Arnold, in his "Historical Lectures," — which (it should not be forgotten), though the latest production of his life, were the earliest of his systematic meditations on *general* history, — showed few and faint symptoms of having conceived, with any distinctness, this third step in historical study. But he had, as far as the nature of the work admitted, completely realized the second stage; and, to those who have not yet attained that stage, there can scarcely be more instructive reading than his Lectures. The same praise must be given, in an even higher sense, to the earliest of the three great modern French historians, — M. Augustin Thierry.

It was from historical romances that M. Thierry learned to recognize the worthlessness of what in those days were called histories: Chateaubriand and Sir Walter Scott were his early teachers. He has himself described the effect produced upon him and others, by finding, in "Ivanhoe," Saxons and Normans in the reign of Richard I. Why, he asked himself, should the professed historians have left such a fact as this to be brought to light by a novelist? and what else were such men likely to have understood of the age, when so important and distinctive a feature of it had

escaped them? The study of the original sources of French history completed his conviction of the senselessness of the modern compilers. He resolved "to plant the standard of historical reform;" and to this undertaking all his subsequent life has been consecrated. His "History of the Norman Conquest," though justly chargeable with riding a favorite idea too hard, forms an era in English history. In another of his works, the "Lettres sur l'Histoire de France," in which profound learning is combined with that clear practical insight into the realities of life, which in France, more than in any other country except Italy, accompanies speculative eminence, M. Thierry gives a *piquant* exposure of the incapacity of historians to enter into the spirit of the middle ages, and the ludicrously false impressions they communicate of human life as it was in early times. Exemplifying the right method as well as censuring the wrong, he, in the same work, extracted from the records of the middle ages some portions, not large but valuable, of the neglected facts which constitute the real history of European society. Nowhere, however, is M. Thierry's genius so pleasingly displayed as in his most recent publication, the work of his premature old age, written under the double affliction of blindness and paralysis, — the "Récits des Temps Mérovingiens." This book, the first series of which is all that has been published, was destined to paint — what till that time he had only discussed and described — that chaos of primitive barbarism and encrusted civilization from which the present nations of Europe had their origin, and which forms the transition from ancient to modern history. He makes the age

tell its own story; not drawing any thing from invention, but adhering scrupulously to authentic facts. As the history of the three centuries preceding Charlemagne was not worth writing throughout in fulness of detail, he contents himself with portions of it; selecting such as, while they are illustrative of the times, are also in themselves complete stories, furnished with characters and personal interest. The experiment is completely successful. The grace and beauty of the narration make these true histories as pleasant reading as if they were a charming collection of fictitious tales; while the practical feeling they impart of the form of human life from which they are drawn, — the familiar understanding they communicate of *la vie barbare*, — is unexampled even in fiction, and unthought of heretofore in any writing professedly historical. The narratives are preceded by an improved *résumé* of the author's previous labors in the theoretical department of his subject, under the title of a "Dissertation on the Progress of Historical Studies in France."

M. Guizot has a mind of a different cast from M. Thierry: the one is especially a man of speculation and science, as the other is, more emphatically, in the high European sense of the term, an artist; though this is not to be understood of either in an exclusive sense, each possessing a fair share of the qualities characteristic of the other. Of all Continental historians of whom we are aware, M. Guizot is the one best adapted to this country, and a familiarity with whose writings would do most to train and ripen among us the growing spirit of historical speculation.

M. Guizot's only narrative work is the unfinished

history, already referred to, of what is called in France the English Revolution. His principal productions are the "Essais sur l'Histoire de France," published in 1822; and the Lectures, which the whole literary public of Paris thronged to hear, from 1828 to 1830, and to which, as well as to his English history, the political events of the last of those years put an abrupt termination. The immense popularity of these writings in their own country — a country not more patient of the *genre ennuyeux* than its neighbors — is a sufficient guarantee that their wearing the form of dissertation, and not of narrative, is, in this instance, no detriment to their attractiveness. Even the light reader will find in them no resemblance to the chapters on "manners and customs," which, with pardonable impatience, he is accustomed to skip when turning over any of the historians of the old school. For in them we find only that dullest and most useless of all things, mere facts without ideas: M. Guizot creates within those dry bones a living soul.

M. Guizot does not, as in the main must be said of M. Thierry, remain in what we have called the second region of historical inquiry: he makes frequent and long incursions into the third. He not only inquires what our ancestors were, but what made them so; what gave rise to the peculiar state of society of the middle ages, and by what causes this state was progressively transformed into what we see around us. His success in this respect could not, in the almost nascent state of the science of history, be perfect; but it is as great as was perhaps compatible with the limits of his design. For (as M. Comte has well remarked),

in the study of history, we must proceed from the *ensemble* to the details, and not conversely. We cannot explain the facts of any age or nation, unless we have first traced out some connected view of the main outline of history. The great universal results must be first accounted for, not only because they are the most important, but because they depend on the simplest laws. Taking place on so large a scale as to neutralize the operation of local and partial agents, it is in them alone that we see in undisguised action the inherent tendencies of the human race. Those great results, therefore, may admit of a complete theory: while it would be impossible to give a full analysis of the innumerable causes which influenced the local or temporary development of some section of mankind; and even a distant approximation to it supposes a previous understanding of the general laws, to which these local causes stand in the relation of modifying circumstances.

But, before astronomy had its Newton, there was a place, and an honorable one, for not only the observer Tycho, but the theorizer Kepler. M. Guizot is the Kepler, and something more, of his particular subject. He has a real talent for the explanation and generalization of historical facts. He unfolds at least the proximate causes of social phenomena, with rare discernment, and much knowledge of human nature. We recognize, moreover, in all his theories, not only a solidity of acquirements, but a sobriety and impartiality, which neither his countrymen, nor speculative thinkers in general, have often manifested in so high a degree. He does not exaggerate the influence of some one cause

or agency, sacrificing all others to it. He neither writes as if human affairs were absolutely moulded by the wisdom and virtue or the vices and follies of rulers; nor as if the general circumstances of society did all, and accident or eminent individuals could do nothing. He neither attributes every thing to political institutions, nor every thing to the ideas and convictions in men's minds; but shows how they both co-operate, and re-act upon one another. He sees in European civilization the complex product of many conflicting influences, — Germanic, Roman, and Christian; and of the peculiar position in which these different forces were brought to act upon one another. He ascribes to each of them its share of influence. Whatever may be added to his speculations in a more advanced state of historical science, little that he has done, will, we think, require to be undone: his conclusions are seldom likely to be found in contradiction with the deeper or more extensive results that may, perhaps, hereafter be obtained.

It speaks little for the intellectual tastes and the liberal curiosity of our countrymen, that they remain ignorant or neglectful of such writings. The Essays we have seldom met with an Englishman who had read. Of the Lectures, one volume has been twice translated, and has had some readers, especially when M. Guizot's arrival in England, as the representative of his country, obtruded (as Dr. Chalmers would say) a knowledge of his existence and character upon London society. But the other five volumes are untranslated and unread, although they are the work itself, to which the first volume is, in truth, only the introduction. When the

Villèle Ministry was overthrown, and the interdict removed, by which the Government of the Restoration had chained up all independent speculation, M. Guizot re-opened his lecture-room, after a suspension of near ten years. Half the academic season having then expired, he was compelled, not only to restrict his view of modern history to the merest outline, but to leave out half the subject altogether: treating only of the progress of society, and reserving, for the more extended labors of subsequent years, the development of the individual human being. Yet critics have been found in England, who, in entire ignorance that the volume before them was a mere preface, visited upon the author, as shortcomings in his own doctrines, the *lacunæ* unavoidably left in his first year's Lectures, and amply filled up in those of the succeeding seasons; charging upon him, as a grave philosophical error, that he saw in history only institutions and social relations, and altogether overlooked human beings.

What has obtained for the introductory volume the share of attention with which it (and not the others) has been treated by the English public, is perhaps that it bears, as its second title, "History of Civilization in Europe;" while the other volumes, after the words "Cours d'Histoire Moderne," bear the designation of "Histoire de la Civilisation en *France*," and, as such, may have been deemed not specially interesting to England. But, though this may avail in explanation, it is inadmissible as an excuse. A person must need instruction in history very much, who does not know, that the history of civilization in France *is* that of civilization in Europe. The main course of the stream



of civilization is identical in all the western nations; their origin was essentially similar; they went through the same phases; and society, in all of them, at least until after the Reformation, consisted fundamentally of the same elements. Any one country, therefore, may, in some measure, stand for all the rest. But France is the best type, as representing best the average circumstances of Europe. There is no country in which the general tendencies of modern society have been so little interfered with by secondary and modifying agencies. In England, for example, much is to be ascribed to the peculiarity of a double conquest. While, elsewhere, one race of barbarians overran an extensive region, and settled down amidst a subject population greatly more numerous, as well as more civilized, than themselves; the first invaders of England, instead of enslaving, exterminated or expelled the former inhabitants; and, after growing up into a nation, were, in their turn, subdued by a race almost exactly on a level with them in civilization. The Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, and a great part of Germany, had never been conquered at all; and, in the latter, much depended upon the elective character of the head of the empire, which prevented the consolidation of a powerful central government. In Italy, the early predominance of towns and town-life; in Spain, the Moorish occupation and its consequences;—co-existed as modifying causes with the general circumstances common to all. But, in France, no disturbing forces, of any thing like equal potency, can be traced; and the universal tendencies, having prevailed more completely, are more obviously discernible.

To any European, therefore, the history of France is not a foreign subject, but part of his national history. Nor is there any thing partial or local in M. Guizot's treatment of it. He draws his details and exemplifications from France; but his principles are universal. The social conditions and changes which he delineates were not French, but European. The intellectual progress which he retraces was the progress of the European mind.

A similar remark applies to the "History of France" by M. Michelet, the third great French historian of the present era; a work which, even in its unfinished state, is the most important that he has produced, and of which it is now time that we should begin to give an account.

M. Michelet has, among the writers of European history, a position peculiarly his own.

Were we to say that M. Michelet is altogether as safe a writer as M. Thierry or M. Guizot; that his interpretations of history may be accepted as actual history; that those who dislike to think or explore for themselves may sleep peacefully in the faith that M. Michelet has thought and explored for them,—we should give him a different kind of praise from that which we consider his due. M. Michelet's are not books to save a reader the trouble of thinking, but to make him boil over with thought. Their effect on the mind is not acquiescence, but stir and ferment.

M. Michelet has opened a new vein in the history of the middle ages. A pupil of M. Guizot, or at least an admiring auditor, who has learned from him most of

what he had to teach, M. Michelet, for this very reason, has not followed in his wake, but consulted the bent of his own faculties, which prompted him to undertake precisely what M. Guizot had left undone. Of him it would be very unlikely to be said, even falsely, that he thought only of society. Without overlooking society, man is his especial subject. M. Guizot has neglected neither, but has treated them both conformably to the character of his own mind. He is himself two things, — a statesman and a speculative thinker; and in his Lectures, when he leaves the province of the statesman, it is for that of the metaphysician. His history of the human mind is principally the history of speculation. It is otherwise with M. Michelet. His peculiar element is that of the poet, as his countrymen would say; of the religious man, as would be said in a religious age: in reality, of both. Not the intellectual life of intellectual men, not the social life of the people, but their internal life; their thoughts and feelings in relation to themselves and their destination; the habitual temper of their minds, — not overlooking, of course, their external circumstances. He concerns himself more with masses than with literary individuals, except as specimens, on a larger scale, of what was in the general heart of their age. His chief interest is for the collective mind, the everyday plebeian mind of humanity, — its enthusiasms, its collapses, its strivings, its attainments and failures. He makes us feel with its sufferings, rejoice in its hopes. He makes us identify ourselves with the varying fortunes and feelings of human nature, as if mankind or Christendom were one being, the single and indivisible hero of a tale.

M. Michelet had afforded an earnest of these qualities in his former writings. He has written a history of the Roman Republic, in which he availed himself largely, as all writers on Roman history now do, of the new views opened by the profound sagacity of Niebuhr. One thing, however, he has not drawn from Niebuhr; for Niebuhr had it not to bestow. We have no right to require, that an author, who has done in his department great things which no one before him had done, or could do, should have done all other good things likewise. But, without meaning disparagement to Niebuhr, it has always struck us as remarkable, that a mind so fitted to throw light upon the dark places in the Roman manner of existence should have exhausted its efforts in clearing up and rendering intelligible the merely civic life of the Roman people. By the aid of Niebuhr, we now know, better than we had ever reckoned upon knowing, what the Roman Republic was. But what the Romans themselves were, we scarcely know better than we did before. It is true, that citizenship, its ideas, feelings, and active duties, filled a larger space in ancient than in any form of modern life; but they did not constitute the whole. A Roman citizen had a religion and gods; had a religious morality; had domestic relations: there were women in Rome as well as men; there were children, who were brought up and educated in a certain manner; there were, even in the earliest period of the Roman Commonwealth, slaves. Of all this, one perceives hardly any thing in Niebuhr's voluminous work. The central idea of the Roman religion and polity, — the family, — scarcely shows itself, except in connection with the classification of the citizens; nor are

we made to perceive in what the beliefs and modes of conduct of the Romans, respecting things in general, agreed, and in what disagreed, with those of the rest of the ancient world. Yet the mystery of the Romans and of their fortunes must lie there. Now, of many of these things, one does learn something from the much smaller work of M. Michelet. In imaging to ourselves the relation in which a Roman stood, not to his fellow-citizens as such, but to the universe, we gain some help from Michelet; next to none from Niebuhr. The work before us has, in a still greater degree, a similar merit. Without neglecting the outward condition of mankind, but, on the contrary, throwing much new light upon it, he tells us mainly their inward mental workings. Others have taught us as much of how mankind acted at each period; but no one makes us so well comprehend how they felt. He is the subjective historian of the middle ages.

For his book, at least in the earlier volumes, is a history of the middle ages, quite as much as of France; and he has aimed at giving us, not the dry husk, but the spirit of those ages. This had never been done before in the same degree, not even by his eminent precursor, Thierry, except for the period of the Germanic invasions. The great value of the book is, that it does, to some extent, make us understand what was really passing in the collective mind of each generation. For, in assuming distinctness, the life of the past assumes also variety under M. Michelet's hands. With him, each period has a physiognomy and a character of its own. It is in reading him that we are made to feel distinctly how many successive conditions of humanity, and states

of the human mind, are habitually confounded under the appellation of the "Middle Ages." To common perception, those times are like a distant range of mountains, all melted together into one cloud-like barrier. To M. Michelet, they are like the same range on a nearer approach, resolved into its separate mountain masses, with sloping sides overlapping one another, and gorges opening between them.

The spirit of an age is a part of its history which cannot be extracted literally from ancient records, but must be distilled from those arid materials by the chemistry of the writer's own mind; and whoever attempts this will expose himself to the imputation of substituting imagination for facts, writing history by divination, and the like. These accusations have been often brought against M. Michelet, and we will not take upon ourselves to say that they are never just: we think he is not seldom the dupe of his own ingenuity. But it is a mistake to suppose that a man of genius will be oftener wrong, in his views of history, than a dull, unimaginative proser. Not only are the very errors of the one more instructive than the commonplaces of the other, but he commits fewer of them. It by no means follows, that he who cannot see so far as another, must therefore see more correctly. To be incapable of discerning what is, gives no exemption from believing what is not; and there is no perversion of history by persons who think, equal to those daily committed by writers who never rise to the height of an original idea.

It is true, a person of lively apprehension and fertile invention, relying on his sagacity, may neglect the

careful study of original documents. But M. Michelet is a man of deep erudition and extensive research. He has a high reputation among the French learned for his industry; while his official position, which connects him with the archives of the kingdom, has given him access to a rich source of unexplored authorities, of which he has made abundant use in his later volumes, and which promise to be of still greater importance in those yet to come. Even in its mere facts, therefore, this history is considerably in advance of all previously written. That his accuracy is not vulnerable in any material point may be believed on the authority of the sober and right-minded Thierry, who, in the preface to the *Récits*, in a passage where, though Michelet is not named, he is evidently pointed at, blames his method as a dangerous one; but acquits M. Michelet himself as having been saved by "conscientious studies" from the errors into which his example is likely to betray young writers. The carefulness of his investigations has been impugned on minor points. An English Review has made a violent attack upon his account of Boniface VIII.; and, from his references (which are always copious), it does not appear that he had consulted the Italian authorities on whom the reviewer relies. But it is hard to try an historian by the correctness of his details in incidents only collaterally connected with his subject. We ourselves perceive that he sometimes trusts to memory, and is inaccurate in trifles; but the true question is, Has he falsified the essential character of any of the greater events of the time about which he writes? If he has not, but on the contrary has placed many of those events in a truer light, and rendered their char-

acter more intelligible, than any former historian, to rectify his small mistakes will be a very fitting employment for those who have the necessary information, and nothing more important to do.

The History, though a real narrative, not a dissertation, is, in all its earlier parts, a greatly abridged one. The writer dwells only on the great facts which paint their period, or on things which it appears to him necessary to present in a new light. As in his progress, however, he came into contact with his new materials, his design has extended; and the fourth and fifth volumes, embracing the confused period of the wars of Edward III. and Henry V., contain, though in a most condensed style, a tolerably minute recital of events. It is impossible for us to make any approach to an abstract of the contents of so large a work. We must be satisfied with touching cursorily upon some of the passages of history, on which M. Michelet's views are the most original, or otherwise most deserving of notice.

In the first volume, he is on ground which had already been broken and well turned over by M. Thierry. But some one was still wanting who should write the history of the time, in a connected narrative, from M. Thierry's point of view. M. Michelet has done this, and more. He has not only understood, like his predecessor, the character of the age of transition, in which the various races, conquered and conquering, were mixed on French soil without being blended; but he has endeavored to assign to the several elements of that confused mixture the share of influence which belongs to them over the subsequent destinies of his country.



It was natural that a subjective historian, one who looks, above all, to the internal moving forces of human affairs, should attach great historical importance to the consideration of races. This subject, on British soil, has usually fallen into hands little competent to treat it soberly, or on true principles of induction; but of the great influence of race in the production of national character no reasonable inquirer can now doubt. As far as history, and social circumstances generally, are concerned, how little resemblance can be traced between the French and the Irish! in national character, how much! The same ready excitability; the same impetuosity when excited, yet the same readiness under excitement to submit to the severest discipline, — a quality which at first might seem to contradict impetuosity, but which arises from that very vehemence of character with which it appears to conflict, and is equally conspicuous in Revolutions of Three Days, temperance movements, and meetings on the Hill of Tara; the same sociability and demonstrativeness; the same natural refinement of manners, down to the lowest rank, — in both, the characteristic weakness an inordinate vanity, their more serious moral deficiency the absence of a sensitive regard for truth. Their ready susceptibility to influences, while it makes them less steady in right, makes them also less pertinacious in wrong; and renders them, under favorable circumstances of culture, reclaimable and improvable (especially through their more generous feelings) in a degree to which the more obstinate races are strangers. To what, except their Gaelic blood, can we ascribe all this similarity between populations, the whole course of whose national history has been so dif-

ferent? We say Gaelic, not Celtic, because the Kymri of Wales and Bretagne, though also called Celts, and notwithstanding a close affinity in language, have evinced throughout history, in many respects, an opposite type of character; more like the Spanish Iberians than either the French or Irish: individual instead of gregarious, tough and obstinate instead of impressible; instead of the most disciplinable, one of the most intractable races among mankind.

Historians who preceded M. Michelet had seen chiefly the Frankish or the Roman element, in the formation of modern France. M. Michelet calls attention to the Gaelic element. "The foundation of the French people," he says,\* "is the youthful, soft, and mobile race of the Gaels, *broyante*, sensual, and *légère*; prompt to learn, prompt to despise, greedy of new things." To the ready impressibility of this race, and the easy reception it gave to foreign influences, he attributes the progress made by France. "Such children require severe preceptors. They will meet with such, both from the south and from the north. Their mobility will be fixed, their softness hardened and strengthened. Reason must be added to instinct, reflection to impulse."

It is certain that no people, in a semi-barbarous state, ever received a foreign civilization more rapidly than the French Celts. In a century after Julius Cæsar, not only the south, the *Gallia Narbonensis*, but the whole east of Gaul, from Treves and Cologne southwards, were already almost as Roman as Italy itself. The Roman institutions and ideas took a deeper root in

\* Vol. i. p. 129.

Gaul than in any other province of the Roman Empire, and remained long predominant, wherever no great change was effected in the population by the ravages of the invaders. But, along with this capacity of improvement, M. Michelet does not find in the Gauls that voluntary loyalty of man to man, that free adherence, founded on confiding attachment, which was characteristic of the Germanic tribes, and of which, in his opinion, the feudal relation was the natural result. It is to these qualities, to personal devotedness and faith in one another, that he ascribes the universal success of the Germanic tribes in overpowering the Celtic. He finds already in the latter the root of that passion for equality which distinguishes modern France; and which, when unbalanced by a strong principle of sympathetic union, has always, he says, prevented the pure Celts from becoming a nation. Everywhere among the Celts he finds equal division of inheritances, while in the Germanic races primogeniture easily established itself; an institution which, in a rude state of society, he justly interprets as equivalent to the permanence of the household, the non-separation of families.

We think that M. Michelet has here carried the influence of race too far; and that the difference is better explained by diversity of position, than by diversity of character in the races. The conquerors, a small body scattered over a large territory, could not sever their interests, could not relax the bonds which held them together. They were for many generations encamped in the country, rather than settled in it: they were a military band, requiring a military discipline; and the separate members could not venture to detach them-

selves from each other, or from their chief. Similar circumstances would have produced similar results among the Gauls themselves. They were by no means without something analogous to the German *comitatus* (as the voluntary bond of adherence, of the most sacred kind, between followers and a leader of their choice, is called by the Roman historians). The *devoti* of the Gauls and Aquitanians, mentioned by M. Michelet himself, on the authority of Cæsar\* and Athenæus, were evidently not clansmen. Some such relation may be traced in many other warlike tribes. We find it even among the most obstinately personal of all the races of antiquity, the Iberians of Spain: witness the Roman Sertorius and his Spanish body-guard, who slew themselves, to the last man, before his funeral-pile. "Ce principe d'attachement à un chef, ce dévouement personnel, cette religion de l'homme envers l'homme," † is thus by no means peculiar to the Teutonic races. And our author's favorite idea of the *profonde impersonnalité* ‡ inherent in the Germanic genius, though we are far from saying that there is no foundation for it, surely requires some limitation. It will hardly, for example, be held true of the English; yet the English are a Germanic people. They, indeed, have rather (or at least had) the characteristic which M. Michelet predicates of the Celts (thinking apparently rather of the

\* Aducantanus, qui summam imperii tenebat, cum DC devotis, quos illi soldurios appellant: quorum hæc est conditio, uti omnibus in vita commodis una cum his fruantur quorum se amicitiae dederint: si quid iis per vim accidat, aut eundem casum una ferant, aut sibi mortem consciscant: neque adhuc hominum memoria repertus est quisquam, qui, eo interfecto cuius se amicitiae devovisset, mori recusaret. — *De Bello Gallico*, iii. 22.

† Michelet, vol. i. p. 168.

‡ *Ib.*, p. 171.

Kymri than of the Gaels), *le génie de la personnalité libre*; a tendency to revolt against compulsion, to hold fast to their own, and assert the claims of individuality against those of society and authority. But, though many of M. Michelet's speculations on the characteristics of races appear to us contestable, they are always suggestive of thought. The next thing to having a question solved, is to have it well raised. M. Michelet's are views by which a thinker, even if he rejects them, seldom fails to profit.

From the races, our author passes to the provinces, which, by their successive aggregation, composed the French monarchy. France is, in the main, peopled by a mixed race; but it contains several populations of pure race at its remoter extremities. It includes several distinct languages, and above all a great variety of climate, soil, and situation. Next to hereditary organization (if not beyond it), geographical peculiarities have a more powerful influence than any other natural agency in the formation of national character. Any one capable of such speculations will read with strong interest the review of the various provinces of France, which occupies the first hundred and thirty pages of our author's second volume. In this brilliant sketch, he surveys the local circumstances and national peculiarities of each province, and compares them with the type of character which belongs to its inhabitants, as shown in the history of each province, in the eminent individuals who have sprung from it, and in the results of intelligent personal observation even in the present day. We say *even*, because M. Michelet is not unaware of the tendency of provincial and local peculiarities

to disappear. A strenuous assertor of the power of mind over matter, of will over spontaneous propensities, culture over nature, he holds that local characteristics lose their importance as history advances. In a rude age, the "fatalities" of race and geographical position are absolute. In the progress of society, human forethought and purpose, acting by means of uniform institutions and modes of culture, tend more and more to efface the pristine differences. And he attributes, in no small degree, the greatness of France to the absence of any marked local peculiarities in the predominant part of her population. Paris, and an extensive region all round, — from the borders of Brittany to the eastern limits of Champagne, from the northern extremity of Picardy to the mountains of Auvergne, — is distinguished by no marked natural features; and its inhabitants — a more mixed population than any other in France — have no distinct, well-defined individuality of character. This very deficiency, or what might seem so, makes them the ready recipients of ideas and modes of action from all sides, and qualifies them to bind together heterogeneous populations in harmonious union, by receiving the influence and assuming the character of each, as far as may be, without exclusion of the rest. In those different populations (on the other hand), M. Michelet finds an abundant variety of provincial characteristics, of all shades and degrees, up to those obstinate individualities which cling with the tenacity of iron to their own usages, and yield only after a long and dogged resistance to the general movement of humanity. In these portraits of the provinces there is much to admire, and occasionally something to startle. The form and

vesture are more poetical than philosophical : the sketch of Brittany wants only verse to be a fine poem. But, though fancifully expressed, there is in this survey of France much more which seems, than which is, fanciful. There is, as we believe, for much, if not most of it, a foundation of sober reason ; and out of its poetry we could extract an excellent treatise in unexceptionable prose, did not our limits admonish us to hurry to those parts of the work which are of more universal interest.

From this place, the book becomes a picture of the middle ages, in a series of *tableaux*. The facts are not delivered in the dry form of chronological annals, but are grouped round a certain number of central figures or leading events, selected so that each half-century has at least one *tableau* belonging to it. The groups, we need scarcely add, represent the mind of the age, not its mere outward physiognomy and costume. The successive titles of the chapters will form an appropriate catalogue to this new kind of historical picture gallery : —

“ Chap. I. The Year 1000 ; The French King and the French Pope, Robert and Gerbert ; Feudal France. — II. Eleventh Century ; Gregory VII. ; Alliance between the Normans and the Church ; Conquests of Naples and England. — III. The Crusade. — IV. Consequences of the Crusade ; The Communes ; Abailard ; First Half of the Twelfth Century. — V. The King of France and the King of England, Louis-le-Jeune and Henry Plantagenet ; Second Crusade ; Humiliation of Louis ; Thomas Becket ; Humiliation of Henry. — VI. The Year 1100 ; Innocent III. ; The Pope, by the Arms of the Northern French, prevails over the King of England and the Emperor of Germany, the Greek Empire and the Albigeois ; Greatness of the King of France. — VII. The

last Chapter continued; Ruin of John; Defeat of the Emperor; War of the Albigeois. — VIII. First Half of the Thirteenth Century; Mysticism; Louis IX.; Sanctity of the King of France. — IX. Struggle between the Mendicant Orders and the University; St. Thomas; Doubts of St. Louis; The Passion as a Principle of Art in the Middle Ages."

The next chapter, being the first of the third volume, is headed, "The Sicilian Vespers;" the second, "Philippe le Bel and Boniface VIII."

This arrangement of topics promises much; and the promise is well redeemed. Every one of the chapters we have cited is full of interesting *aperçus*, and fruitful in suggestions of thought.

Forced to make a selection, we shall choose, among the features of the middle age as here presented, one or two of the most interesting, and the most imperfectly understood. Of the individual figures in our author's canvas, none is more impressive than Hildebrand. Of the moral and social phenomena which he depicts, the greatest is the Papacy.

Respecting the Papal Church, and that, its greatest pontiff, the opinions of our author are such as, from the greater number of English readers, can scarcely hope for ready acceptance. They are far removed from those either of our Protestant or of our sceptical historians. They are so unlike Hume, that they stand a chance of being confounded with Lingard. Such, however, as they are, we think them well worth knowing and considering. They are, in substance, the opinions of almost every historical inquirer in France, who has any pretensions to thought or research, be he Catholic,



Protestant, or Infidel. The time is past when any French thinker, worthy the name, looked upon the Catholic hierarchy as having always been the base and tyrannical thing, which, to a great extent, it ultimately became. No one now confounds what the Church was, when its prelates and clergy universally believed what they taught, with what it was when they had ceased to believe. No one argues, — from the conduct which they even conscientiously pursued when the human intellect, having got beyond the Church, became its most formidable foe, — that it must therefore have been equally an enemy to improvement when it was at the head, instead of the rear, of civilization; when all that was instructed in Europe was comprised within its pale, and it was the authorized champion of intelligence and self-control, against military and predatory violence. Even the fraud and craft by which it often aided itself in its struggles with brute force; even the ambition and selfishness, by which, in its very best days, its nobler aims, like those of all other classes or bodies, were continually tarnished, — do not disguise from impartial thinkers on the Continent the fact that it was the great improver and civilizer of Europe.

That the clergy were the preservers of all letters and all culture, of the writings and even the traditions of literary antiquity, is too evident to have been ever disputed. But for them, there would have been a complete break, in Western Europe, between the ancient and modern world. Books would have disappeared; and even Christianity, if it survived at all, would have existed merely as another form of the old barbarous superstitions. Some, too, are aware of the services

rendered even to material civilization by the monastic associations of Italy and France, after the great reform by St. Benedict. Unlike the useless communities of contemplative ascetics in the East, they were diligent in tilling the earth and fabricating useful products; they knew and taught that temporal work may also be a spiritual exercise; and, protected by their sacred character from depredation, they set the first example to Europe of industry conducted on a large scale by free labor. But these things are commonly regarded as good which came out of evil; incidental benefits, arising casually or providentially from an institution radically vicious. It would do many English thinkers much good to acquaint themselves with the grounds on which the best Continental minds, without disguising one particle of the evil which existed openly or latently in the Romish Church, are on the whole convinced that it was not only a beneficent institution, but the only means capable of being now assigned, by which Europe could have been reclaimed from barbarism.

It is, no doubt, the characteristic evil incident to a corporation of priests, that the exaltation of their order becomes, in and for itself, a primary object, to which the ends of the institution are often sacrificed. That exaltation is the strongest interest of all its members, the bad equally with the good; for it is the means by which both hope to attain their ends. The maintenance of their influence is to them what the maintenance of its revenue is to a temporal government, — the condition of its existence. The Romish Church, being more powerfully organized and more thoroughly disciplined than any other, pursued this end with inflexible energy

and perseverance, and often by the most culpable means. False miracles, forged donations, persecution of heretics, — these things we have no desire to extenuate; but he must be wretchedly ignorant of human nature, who believes that any great or durable edifice of moral power was ever raised chiefly by such means. It is in the decline, in the decrepitude of religious systems, that force and artifice come into the first rank as expedients for maintaining a little longer what is left of their dominion. Deep sincerity, entire absorption of themselves in their task, were assuredly as indispensable conditions, in the more eminent of the popes, of the success which they met with, as in the heroes of the Reformation. In such men the power of the hierarchy might well become a passion; but the extension of that power was a legitimate object, for the sake of the great things which they had to accomplish by it.

Who, in the middle ages, were worthier of power than the clergy? Did they not need all, and more than all, the influence they could acquire, when they could not be kings or emperors, and when kings and emperors were among those whose passion and arrogance they had to admonish and govern? The great Ambrose, refusing absolution to Theodosius until he performed penance for a massacre, was a type of what these men had to do. In an age of violence and *brigandage*, who but the Church could insist on justice and forbearance and reconciliation? In an age when the weak were prostrate at the feet of the strong, who was there but the Church to plead to the strong for the weak? They were the depositaries of the only moral power to which the great were amenable: they alone had a right

to remind kings and potentates of responsibility; to speak to them of humility, charity, and peace. Even in the times of the first ferocious invaders, the "Récits" of M. Thierry (though the least favorable of the modern French historians to the Romish clergy) show, at what peril to themselves, the prelates of the Church continually stepped between the oppressor and his victim. Almost all the great social improvements which took place were accomplished under their influence. They at all times took part with the kings against the feudal anarchy. The enfranchisement of the mass of the people from personal servitude, they not only favored, but inculcated as a Christian duty. They were the authors of the "Truce of God," that well-known attempt to mitigate the prevailing brutalities, by a forced suspension of acts of vengeance and private war during four days and five nights of every week. They could not succeed in enforcing this periodical armistice, which was too much in advance of the time. Their worst offence was, that they connived at acts of unjust acquisition by friends and supporters of the pope; and encouraged unprovoked aggressions, by orthodox princes, against less obedient sons of the Church. We may add, that they were seldom favorable to civil liberty; which, indeed, in the rude form in which its first germs grew up, not as an institution, but as a principle of resistance to institutions, found little favor with speculative men in the middle ages; to whom, by a not unnatural prejudice at such a time, peace and obedience seemed the primary condition of good. But, in another sense, the Church was eminently a democratic institution. To a temporal society in which all rank depended on

birth, it opposed a spiritual society in which the source of rank was personal qualities ; in which the distinctions of people and aristocracy, freeman and bondman, disappeared ; which recruited itself from all ranks ; in which a serf might rise to be a cardinal, or even a pope ; while to rise at all to any eminence almost always required talents, and at least a reputation for virtue. In one of the earliest combinations made by the feudal nobles against the clergy, the league of the French Seigneurs in 1246, it stands in the foremost rank of accusation against them, that they were the " sons of serfs." \*

Now, we say that the priesthood never could have stood their ground, in such an age, against kings and their powerful vassals, as an independent moral authority, entitled to advise, to reprimand, and, if need were, to denounce, if they had not been bound together into an European body, under a government of their own. They must otherwise have grovelled from the first in that slavish subservience into which they sank at last. No local, no merely national organization, would have sufficed. The State has too strong a hold upon an exclusively national corporation. Nothing but an authority recognized by many nations, and not essentially dependent upon any one, could, in that age, have been adequate to the post. It required a pope to speak with authority to kings and emperors. Had an individual priest or prelate had the courage to tell them that they had violated the law of God, his voice, not being the voice of the Church, would not have been heeded. That the pope, when he pretended to depose

\* Michelet, vol. ii. p. 615, note.

kings, or made war upon them with temporal arms, went beyond his province, needs hardly, in the present day, be insisted on. But when he claimed the right of censuring and denouncing them, with whatever degree of solemnity, in the name of the moral law which all recognized, he assumed a function necessary at all times, and which, in those days, no one except the Church could assume, or was in any degree qualified to exercise. Time must show if the organ we now have for the performance of this office; if the censure by newspapers and public meetings, which has succeeded to censure by the Church, — will be found in the end less liable to perversion and abuse than that was. However this may be, the latter form was the only one possible in those days.

Were the popes, then, so entirely in the wrong, as historians have deemed them, in their disputes with the emperors, and with the kings of England and France? Doubtless, they, no more than their antagonists, knew where to stop short. Doubtless, in the ardor of the conflict, they laid claim to powers not compatible with a purely spiritual authority, and occasionally put forth pretensions, which, if completely successful, would have plunged Europe into the torpor of an Egyptian hierarchy. But there never was any danger lest they should succeed too far. The Church was always the weaker party, and occupied essentially a defensive position.

We cannot feel any doubt that Gregory VII., whatever errors he may have committed, was right in the great objects which he proposed to himself. His life is memorable by two things, — his contest with the State,

and the reform in the Church itself, which preceded it. The Church was rapidly becoming secularized. He checked the evil, by enforcing the celibacy of the clergy. Protestant writers have looked upon this ordinance of the Catholic Church as the joint product of pontifical ambition and popular fanaticism. We would not deny, that fanaticism, or rather religious asceticism, had much to do with the popular feeling on the subject, and was perhaps the only lever by which the work could possibly have been accomplished; but we believe that in that age, without the institution of celibacy, the efficiency of the Church as an instrument of human culture was gone. In the early, vigorous youth of the feudal system, when every thing tended to become hereditary, when every temporal function had already become so, the clerical office was rapidly becoming hereditary too. The clergy were becoming a Braminical caste; or worse, — a mere appendage of the caste of soldiery. Already the prelacies and abbacies were filled by the younger brothers of the feudal nobility, who, like their elder brethren, spent the greater part of their time in hunting and war. These had begun to transmit their benefices to their sons, and give them in marriage with their daughters. The smaller preferments would have become the prey of their smaller retainers. Against this evil, what other remedy than that which Gregory adopted did the age afford? Could it remain unremedied?

And what, when impartially considered, is the protracted dispute about investitures, except a prolongation of the same struggle? For what end did the princes of the middle ages desire the appointment of prelates?

To make their profit of the revenues by keeping the sees vacant ; to purchase tools, and reward adherents ; at best, to keep the office in a state of complete subservience. It was no immoderate pretension in the spiritual authority to claim the free choice of its own instruments. The emperors had previously asserted a right to nominate the pope himself, and had exercised that right in many instances. Had they succeeded, the spiritual power would have become that mere instrument of despotism which it became at Constantinople ; which it is in Russia ; which the popes of Avignon became in the hands of the French kings. And, even had the pope maintained his own personal independence, the nomination of the national clergy by their respective monarchs, with no effectual concurrence of his, would have made the national clergy take part with the kings against their own order ; as a large section of them always did, and as the whole clergy of France and England ended by doing, because in those countries the kings, in the main, succeeded in keeping possession of the appointment to benefices.

Even for what seems in the abstract a still more objectionable pretension, the claim to the exemption of ecclesiastics from secular jurisdiction, which has scandalized so grievously most of our English historians, there is much more to be said than those historians were aware of. What was it, after all, but the assertion, in behalf of the clergy, of the received English principle of being tried by their peers ? The secular tribunals were the courts of a rival power, often in actual conflict with the clergy, always jealous of them, always ready to make use of its jurisdiction as a means



of wreaking its vengeance, or serving its ambition; and were stained besides with the grossest corruption and tyranny. "These rights," says M. Michelet,\* "gave rise, no doubt, to great abuses: many crimes were committed by priests, and committed with impunity; but when one reflects on the frightful barbarity, the execrable fiscality, of the lay tribunals in the twelfth century, one is forced to admit that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction was then an anchor of safety. It spared, perhaps, the guilty; but how often it saved the innocent! The Church was almost the only road by which the despised races were able to recover any ascendancy. We see this by the example of the two Saxons, — Breakspear (Adrian IV.) and Becket. The liberties of the Church in that age were those of mankind."

On the other hand, Henry II., by the Constitutions of Clarendon, assumed to himself, and his great justiciary, a veto on the purely spiritual act of excommunication, — the last resort of the Church; the ultimate sanction on which she depended for her moral jurisdiction. No one of the king's tenants was to be excommunicated without his consent. On which side was here the usurpation? And, in this pretension, Henry was supported by the great majority of his own bishops. So little cause was there really to dread any undue preponderance of popes over kings.

The Papacy was in the end defeated, even in its reasonable claims. It had to give up, in the main, all the contested points. As the monarchies of Europe were consolidated, and the kings grew more powerful,

\* Vol. ii. p. 343.

the Church became more dependent. The last pope who dared to defy a bad king was made a prisoner in his palace, insulted and struck by the emissary of the tyrant. That pope died broken-hearted : his immediate successor died poisoned. The next was Clement V., in whom, for the first time, the Church sank into the abject tool of secular tyranny. With him commenced that new era of the Papacy, which made it the horror and disgust of the then rapidly improving European mind, until the Reformation and its consequences closed the period which we commonly call the "middle age."

We know it may be said, that, long before this time, venality was a current and merited accusation against the papal court. We often find Rome denounced, by the indignation of cotemporaries, as a market in which every thing might be bought. All periods of supposed purity in the past administration of human affairs are the dreams of a golden age. We well know, that there was only occasionally a pope who acted consistently on any high ideal of the pontifical character ; that many were sordid and vicious, and those who were not had often sordid and vicious persons around them. Who can estimate the extent to which the power of the Church, for realizing the noble aims of its more illustrious ornaments, was crippled and made infirm by these shortcomings? But, to the time of Innocent III., if not of Boniface VIII., we are unable to doubt, that it was on the whole a source of good, and of such good as could not have been provided, for that age, by any other means with which we can conceive such an age to be compatible.

Among the epochs in the progressive movement of

middle-age history, which M. Michelet has been the first to bring clearly and vividly before us, there is none more interesting than the great awakening of the human mind which immediately followed the period of the First Crusade. Others before him had pointed out the influence of the Crusade in generating the feeling of a common Christendom; in counteracting the localizing influence of the feudal institutions, and raising up a kind of republic of chivalry and Christianity; in drawing closer the ties between chiefs and vassals, or even serfs, by the need which they mutually experienced of each other's voluntary services; in giving to the rude barons of Western Europe a more varied range of ideas, and a taste for at least the material civilization, which they beheld, for the first time, in the dominions of the Greek emperors and the Saracen soldáns. M. Michelet remarks, that the effect, even upon the religion of the time, was to soften its antipathies, and weaken its superstitions. The hatred of Mussulmans was far less intense after the Crusade than at the beginning of it. The notion of a peculiar sanctity inherent in places was greatly weakened when Christians had become the masters of the Holy Sepulchre, and found themselves neither better nor happier in consequence.

But these special results bear no proportion to the general start which was taken, about this time, by the human mind, and which, though it cannot be ascribed to the Crusade, was, without doubt, greatly favored by it. That remarkable expedition was the first great event of modern times, which had an European and a Christian interest; an interest, not of nation or place or rank, but which the lowest serfs

had in common, and more than in common, with the loftiest barons. When the soil is moved, all sorts of seeds fructify. The serfs now began to think themselves human beings. The beginning of the great popular political movement of the middle ages, — the formation of the *communes*, — is almost coincident with the First Crusade. Some fragments of the eminently dramatic history of this movement are related in the concluding portion of M. Thierry's "Letters on the History of France." Contemporaneously with this temporal enfranchisement began the emancipation of the human mind. Formidable heresies broke out: it was the era of Berengarius, who denied Transubstantiation; of Roscelinus, the founder of Nominalism, and questioner of the received doctrine respecting the Trinity. The very answers of the Orthodox to these heretical writings, as may be seen in M. Michelet,\* were lessons of free-thinking. The principle of free speculation found a still more remarkable representative, though clear of actual heresy, in the most celebrated of the schoolmen, — Abailard. The popularity and European influence of his rationalizing metaphysics, as described by cotemporary authorities, must surprise those who conceive the age as one of rare and difficult communications, and without interest in letters. To silence this one man required the eminent religious ascendancy of the most illustrious churchman of the age, — Bernard of Clairvaux. The acquirements and talents of the noble-minded woman, whose name is linked, for all time, with that of Abailard, — a man, so far as we have the means of judging, not her superior even in intellect,

\* Vol. ii. pp. 279, 280.

and in every other respect unworthy of her, — are illustrative of M. Michelet's views on the change which was taking place in the social condition and estimation of women : —

“The restoration of woman, which had commenced with Christianity, took place chiefly in the twelfth century. A slave in the East, even in the Greek gynæcium a recluse, emancipated by the jurisprudence of the Roman Empire, she was recognized by the new religion as the equal of man. Still, Christianity, but just escaped from the sensuality of Paganism, dreaded woman, and distrusted her ; or, rather, men were conscious of weakness, and endeavored by hardness and scornfulness to fortify themselves against their strongest temptation. . . . When Gregory VII. aimed at detaching the clergy from the ties of a worldly life, there was a new outburst of feeling against that dangerous Eve, whose seductions had ruined Adam, and still pursued him in his sons.

“A movement in the contrary direction commenced in the twelfth century. Free mysticism undertook to upraise what sacerdotal severity had dragged in the mire. It was especially a Breton, Robert d'Arbrissel, who fulfilled this mission of love. He re-opened to women the bosom of Christ ; he founded asylums for them ; he built Fontévrault ; and there were soon other Fontévraults throughout Christendom. . . . There took place insensibly a great religious revolution. The Virgin became the deity of the world : she usurped almost all the temples and altars. Piety turned itself into an enthusiasm of chivalrous gallantry. The mother of God was proclaimed pure and without taint. The Church of Lyons, always mystical in its tendencies, celebrated, in 1134, the feast of the Immaculate Conception ; thus exalting woman in the character of divine maternity, at the precise time when Heloïse was giving expression, in her letters, to the pure disinterestedness of love. Woman reigned in heaven, and

reigned on earth. We see her taking a part, and a leading part, in the affairs of the world. . . . Louis VII. dates his acts from the coronation of his wife Adela. Women sat as judges, not only in poetical contests and courts of love, but, with and on a par with their husbands, in serious affairs: the King of France expressly recognized it as their right. . . . Excluded up to that time from successions by the feudal barbarism, they everywhere became admitted to them in the first half of the twelfth century: in England, in Castile, in Aragon, at Jerusalem, in Burgundy, Flanders, Hainault, Vermandois, Aquitaine, Provence, and the Lower Languedoc. The rapid extinction of males, the softening of manners, and the progress of equity, re-opened inheritances to women. They transported sovereignties into foreign houses, accelerated the agglomeration of states, and prepared the consolidation of great monarchies." — Vol. ii. pp. 297–302.

Half a century further on, the scene is changed. A new act of the great drama is now transacting. The seeds scattered fifty years before have grown up, and overshadow the world. We are no longer in the childhood, but in the stormy youth, of free speculation.

"The face of the world was sombre at the close of the twelfth century. The old order was in peril, and the new had not yet begun. It was no longer the mere material struggle of the pope and the emperor, chasing each other alternately from Rome, as in the days of Henry IV. and Gregory VII. In the eleventh century, the evil was on the surface; in 1200 at the core. A deep and terrible malady had seized upon Christendom. Gladly would it have consented to return to the quarrel of investitures, and have had to combat only on the question of the ring and crosier. In Gregory's time, the cause of the Church was the cause of liberty; it had maintained that character to the time of Alexander III., the chief

of the Lombard league. But Alexander himself had not dared to support Thomas Becket: he had defended the liberties of Italy, and betrayed those of England. The Church was about to detach herself from the great movement of the world. Instead of preceding and guiding it, as she had done hitherto, she strove to fix it, to arrest time on its passage, to stop the earth which was revolving under her feet. Innocent III. seemed to succeed in the attempt: Boniface VIII. perished in it.

“A solemn moment, and of infinite sadness. The hopes which inspired the crusade had abandoned the earth. Authority no longer seemed unassailable: it had promised, and had deceived. Liberty began to dawn, but in a hundred fantastical and repulsive shapes, confused and convulsive, multiform, deformed. . . .

“In this spiritual anarchy of the twelfth century, which the irritated and trembling Church had to attempt to govern, one thing shone forth above others, — a prodigiously audacious sentiment of the moral power and greatness of man. The hardy expression of the Pelagians — ‘Christ had nothing more than I; I too, by virtue, can raise myself to divinity’ — is reproduced in the twelfth century in barbarous and mystical forms. . . . Messiahs everywhere arise. . . . A Messiah appears in Antwerp, and all the populace follow him; another, in Bretagne, seems to revive the ancient gnosticism of Ireland. Amaury of Chartres, and his Breton disciple, David of Dinan, teach that every Christian is materially a member of Christ; in other words, that God is perpetually incarnated in the human race. The Son, say they, has reigned long enough: let the Holy Ghost now reign. . . . Nothing equals the audacity of these doctors, who mostly teach in the University of Paris (authorized by Philippe-Auguste in 1200). Abailard, supposed to be crushed, lives and speaks in his disciple, Peter Lombard; who, from Paris, gives the law to European philosophy: they reckon nearly five

hundred commentators on this schoolman. The spirit of innovation has now acquired two powerful auxiliaries. Jurisprudence is growing up by the side of theology, which it undermines: the popes forbid the clergy to be professors of law, and, by so doing, merely open public teaching to laymen. The metaphysics of Aristotle are brought from Constantinople; while his commentators, imported from Spain, will presently be translated from the Arabic, by order of the kings of Castile, and the Italian princes of the house of Suabia, Frederic II., and Manfred. This is no less than the invasion of Greece and the East into Christian philosophy. Aristotle takes his place almost beside the Saviour. At first prohibited by the popes, afterwards tolerated, he reigns in the professorial chairs: Aristotle publicly, secretly the Arabs and the Jews, with the pantheism of Averroës and the subtleties of the Cabala. Dialectics enters into possession of all subjects, and stirs up all the boldest questions. Simon of Tournai teaches at pleasure the *pour* and the *contre*. One day, when he had delighted the school of Paris by proving marvellously the truth of the Christian religion, he suddenly exclaimed, 'O little Jesus, little Jesus! how I have glorified thy law! If I chose, I could still more easily depreciate it.' — Vol. ii. pp. 392–96.

He then vigorously sketches the religious enthusiasts of Flanders and the Rhine, the Vaudois of the Alps, and the Albigeois of Southern France; and proceeds: —

“What must not have been, in this danger of the Church, the trouble and inquietude of its visible head! . . .

“The pope at that time was a Roman, — Innocent III.; a man fitted to the time. A great lawyer, accustomed on all questions to consult established right, he examined himself, and believed that the right was on his side. And, in truth,



the Church had still in her favor the immense majority, — the voice of the people, which is that of God. She had actual possession, so ancient that it might be deemed prescriptive. The Church was the defendant in the cause, the recognized proprietor, who was in present occupancy, and had the title-deeds: the written law seemed to speak for her. The plaintiff was human intellect; but it came too late, and in its inexperience took the wrong road, chicaning on texts, instead of invoking principles. If asked what it would have, it could make no intelligible answer. All sorts of confused voices called for different things, and most of the assailants wished to retrograde rather than to advance. In politics, their ideas were modelled on the ancient republics; that is, town liberties, to the exclusion of the country. In religion, some wished to suppress the externals of worship, and revert, as they said, to the apostles: others went further back, and returned to the Asiatic spirit; contending for two gods, or preferring the strict unity of Islamism." — pp. 419–21.)

And, after describing the popular detestation which pursued these heretics, —

"Such appeared at that time the enemies of the Church; and the Church was people" (*l'église était peuple*). "The prejudices of the people, the sanguinary intoxication of their hatred and their terror, ascended through all ranks of the clergy to the pope himself. It would be too unjust to human nature to deem that egoism or class-interest alone animated the chiefs of the Church. No: all indicates that in the thirteenth century they were still convinced of their right. That right admitted, all means seemed good to them for defending it. Not for a mere human interest did St. Dominic traverse the regions of the South, alone and unarmed, in the midst of a sectarian population whom he doomed to death, courting martyrdom with the same avidity with which he inflicted it; and, whatever may have been in the great and

terrible Innocent III. the temptations of pride and vengeance, other motives animated him in the crusade against the Albigois and the foundation of the Dominican Inquisition." — pp. 422–3.

The temporal means by which the Church obtained a brief respite from the dangers which beset it consisted in letting loose, against the rich and heretical South, the fanaticism and rapacity of the North. The spiritual expedient, far the more potent of the two, was the foundation of the mendicant orders.

We are too much accustomed to figure to ourselves what are called "religious revivals" as a feature peculiar to Protestantism and to recent times. The phenomenon is universal. In no Christian church has the religious spirit flowed like a perennial fountain: it had ever its flux and reflux, like the tide. Its history is a series of alternations between religious laxity and religious earnestness. Monastery itself, in the organized form impressed upon it by St. Benedict, was one of the incidents of a religious revival. We have already spoken of the great revival under Hildebrand. Ranke has made us understand the religious revival within the pale of Romanism itself, which turned back the advancing torrent of the Reformation. As this was characterized by the foundation of the order of Jesuits, so were the Franciscans and Dominicans the result of a similar revival, and became its powerful instrument.

The mendicant orders — especially the most popular of them, the Franciscans — were the offspring of the free-thinking which had already taken strong root in the European mind; but the freedom which they represented was freedom in alliance with the Church, rising

up against the freedom which was at enmity with the Church, and anathematizing it. What is called in France "mysticism," in England "religious enthusiasm," consists essentially in looking within instead of without; in relying on an internal revelation from God to the individual believer, and receiving its principal inspirations from that, rather than from the authority of priests and teachers. St. Francis of Assisi was such a man. Disowned by the Church, he might have been a heresiarch instead of a saint; but the Church needed men like him, and had the skill to make its instrument of the spirit which was preparing its destruction. "In proportion to the decline of authority," says M. Michelet, "and the diminution of the priestly influence on the popular mind, religious feeling, being no longer under the restraint of forms, expanded itself into mysticism."\* Making room for these mystics in the ecclesiastical system itself, directing their enthusiasm into the path for which it peculiarly qualified them, that of popular preaching, and never parting with the power of repressing any dangerous excess in those whom it retained in its allegiance, the Papacy could afford to give them the rein, and indulge, within certain limits, their most unsacerdotal preference of grace to the law.

The career and character of St. Francis and his early followers are graphically delineated by M. Michelet.† As usual with devotees of his class, his great practical precept was the love of God; love which sought all means of demonstrating itself, now by ecstasies, now by austerities like those of an Indian fakir, but also by love and charity to all creatures. In all things which

\* Vol. iii. p. 195.

† Vol. ii. pp. 538-543.

had life, and in many which had not, he recognized children of God: he invoked the birds to join in gratitude and praise; he parted with his cloak to redeem a lamb from the slaughter. His followers "wandered bare-footed over Europe, always run after by the crowd: in their sermons, they brought the sacred mysteries, as it were, on the stage; laughing in Christmas, weeping on Good Friday, developing without reserve all that Christianity possesses of dramatic elements." The effect of such a band of missionaries must have been great in rousing and feeding dormant devotional feelings. They were not less influential in regulating those feelings, and turning into the established Catholic channels those vagaries of private enthusiasm which might well endanger the Church, since they already threatened society itself. The spirit of religious independence had descended to the miserable, and was teaching them that God had not commanded them to endure their misery. It was a lesson for which they were not yet ripe. "Mysticism," says our author,\* "had already produced its most terrible fruit, hatred of the law; the wild enthusiasm of religious and political liberty. This demagogic character of mysticism, which so clearly manifested itself in the *Jacqueries* of the subsequent ages, especially in the revolt of the Swabian peasants in 1525, and of the Anabaptists in 1538, appeared already in the insurrection of the *Pastoureaux*," during the reign of St. Louis. These unhappy people, who were peasantry of the lowest class, and, like all other insurgents of that class, perished miserably, — *dispersi sunt, et quasi canes rabidi passim detruncati*, are the words of Matthew Paris, —

\* Vol. ii. p. 579.

were avowed enemies of the priests, whom they are said to have massacred, and administered the sacraments themselves. They recognized as their chief a man whom they called the "grand master of Hungary;" and who pretended to hold in his hand, which he kept constantly closed, a written commission from the Virgin Mary. So contradictory to history is that superficial notion of the middle ages, which looks upon the popular mind as strictly orthodox, and implicitly obedient to the pope.

Though the Papacy survived, in apparently undiminished splendor, the crisis of which we have now spoken, the mental ascendancy of the priesthood was never again what it had been before. The most orthodox of the laity, even men whom the Church has canonized, were now comparatively emancipated: they thought *with* the Church, but they no longer let the Church think *for* them. This change in the times is exemplified in the character of St. Louis, himself a lay brother of the Franciscan order; perhaps of all kings the one whose religious conscience was the most scrupulous, yet who learned his religious duty from his own strong and upright judgment, not from his confessor nor from the pope. He never shrank from resisting the Church, when he had right on his side; and was himself a better sample, than any pope cotemporary with him, of the religious character of his age. The influences of the mystical spirit are easily discernible in his remarkable freedom, so rare in that age, from the slavery of the letter; which, as many anecdotes prove, he was always capable of sacrificing to the spirit, when any conflict arose between them.\*

\* Vol. ii. p. 612.

We are obliged to pass rapidly over some other topics, which justice to M. Michelet forbids us entirely to omit. We could extract many passages more illustrative than those we have quoted of his powers as a writer and an artist; such as the highly finished sketch\* of the greatness and ruin of the unfortunate house of Hohenstaufen. We prefer to quote the remarks of greater philosophical interest, with which he winds up one great period of history, and introduces another.

“The crusade of St. Louis was the last crusade. The middle age had produced its ideal, its flower, and its fruit: the time was come for it to perish. In Philippe-le-Bel, grandson of St. Louis, modern times commence: the middle age is insulted in Boniface VIII.; the crusade burned at the stake in the persons of the Templars.

“Crusades will be talked about for some time longer; the word will be often repeated: it is a well-sounding word, good for levying tenths and taxes. But princes, nobles, and popes know well, among themselves, what to think of it. In 1327, we find the Venetian, Sanuto, proposing to the pope a commercial crusade. ‘It is not enough,’ he said, ‘to invade Egypt:’ he proposed ‘to ruin it.’ The means he urged was to re-open to the Indian trade the channel of Persia, so that merchandise might no longer pass through Alexandria and Damietta. Thus does the modern spirit announce its approach: trade, not religion, will soon become the moving principle of great expeditions.” — Vol. ii. pp. 607–8.

And further on, after quoting the bitter denunciation of Dante against the reigning family of France, —

“This furious Ghibelline invective, full of truth and of calumny, is the protest of the old perishing world against the

\* Vol. ii. pp. 587–589.

ngly new world which succeeds it. This new world begins towards 1300: it opens with France, and with the odious figure of Philippe-le-Bel.

“When the French monarchy, founded by Philippe-Auguste, became extinguished in Louis XVI., at least it perished in the immense glory of a young republic, which, at its first onset, vanquished and revolutionized Europe. But the poor middle age, its Papacy, its chivalry, its feudality, under what hands did they perish? Under those of the attorney, the fraudulent bankrupt, the false coiner.

“The bitterness of the poet is excusable: this new world is a repulsive one. If it is more legitimate than that which it replaces, what eye, even that of a Dante, could see this at the time? It is the offspring of the decrepit Roman law, of the old imperial fiscality. It is born a lawyer, a usurer; it is a born Gascon, Lombard, and Jew.

“What is most revolting in this modern system, represented especially by France, is its perpetual self-contradiction; its instinctive duplicity; the naïve hypocrisy, so to speak, with which it attests by turns its two sets of principles, Roman and feudal. France looks like a lawyer in a cuirass, an attorney clad in mail: she employs the feudal power to execute the sentences of the Roman and canon law. If this obedient daughter of the Church seizes upon Italy, and chastises the Church, she chastises her as a daughter, obliged in conscience to correct her mother's misconduct.” — Vol. iii. pp. 31, 32.

Yet this revolting exterior is but the mask of a great and necessary transformation; the substitution of legal authority, in the room of feudal violence and the *arbitrium* of the seigneur; the formation, in short, for the first time, of a government. This government could not be carried on without money. The feudal jurisdictions, the feudal armies, cost nothing to the treasury; the

wages of all feudal services were the land : but the king's judges and administrators, of whom he has now a host, must be paid. "It is not the fault of this government if it is greedy and ravenous. Ravenousness is its nature, its necessity, the foundation of its temperament. To satisfy this, it must alternately make use of cunning and force : the prince must be at once the Reynard and Isegrim of the old satire. To do him justice, he is not a lover of war : he prefers any other means of acquisition ; purchase, for instance, or usury. He traffics, he buys, he exchanges : these are means by which the strong man can honorably plunder his weaker friends." \*

This need of money was, for several centuries, the *primum mobile* of European history. In England, it is the hinge on which our constitutional history has wholly turned : in France and elsewhere, it was the source, from this time forward, of all quarrels between the kings and the Church. The clergy alone were rich, and money must be had. "The confiscation of church-property was the idea of kings from the thirteenth century. The only difference is, that the Protestants took, and the Catholics made the Church give. Henry VIII. had recourse to schism ; Francis I., to the concordat. Who in the fourteenth century, the king or the Church, was thenceforth to prey upon France? — that was the question." — Vol. iii. p. 50.

To get money was the purpose of Philip's quarrel with Boniface ; to get money, he destroyed the Templars.

\* Vol. iii. p. 42.



The proceedings against this celebrated society occupy two most interesting chapters of M. Michelet's work. His view of the subject seems just and reasonable.

The suppression of the order, if this had been all, was both inevitable and justifiable. Since the crusades had ceased, and the crusading spirit died out, their existence and their vast wealth were grounded on false pretences. Among the mass of calumnies, which, in order to make out a case for their destruction, their oppressor accumulated against them, there were probably some truths. It is not in the members of rich and powerful bodies, which have outlived the ostensible purposes of their existence, that high examples of virtue need be sought. But it was not their private misconduct, real or imputed, that gave most aid to royal rapacity in effecting their ruin. What roused opinion against them; what gave something like a popular sanction to that atrocious trial in its early stages, before the sufferings and constancy of the victims had excited a general sympathy, — was, according to our author, a mere mistake; a *malentendu*, arising from a change in the spirit of the times.

“The forms of reception into the order were borrowed from the whimsical dramatic rites, the *mysteries*, which the ancient Church did not dread to connect with the most sacred doctrines and objects. The candidate for admission was presented in the character of a sinner, a bad Christian, a renegade. In imitation of St. Peter, he denied Christ: the denial was pantomimically represented by spitting on the cross. The order undertook to restore this renegade, — to lift him to a height as great as the depth to which he had fallen. Thus,

in the Feast of Fools, man offered to the Church, which was to regenerate him, the homage even of his imbecility, of his infamy. These religious comedies, every day less understood, became more and more dangerous, more capable of scandalizing a prosaic age, which saw only the letter, and lost the meaning, of the symbol." — Vol. iii. pp. 127, 128.

This is not a mere fanciful hypothesis. M. Michelet has elsewhere shown that the initiation into the Guilds of Artificers, in the middle ages, was of this very character. The acolyte affected to be the most worthless character upon earth, and was usually made to perform some act symbolical of worthlessness; after which, his admission into the fraternity was to have the merit and honor of his reformation. Such forms were in complete harmony with the genius of an age in which a transfer of land was not binding without the delivery of a clod; in which all things tended to express themselves in mute symbols, rather than by the conventional expedient of verbal language. It is the nature of all forms used on important occasions, to outlast, for an indefinite period, the state of manners and society in which they originated. The childlike character of the religious sentiment in a rude people, who know terror, but not awe, and are often on the most intimate terms of familiarity with the objects of their adoration, makes it easily conceivable that the ceremonies used on admission into the order were established without any irreverent feeling, in the purely symbolical acceptation which some of the witnesses affirmed. The time, however, had passed, when such an explanation would be understood or listened to. "What arrayed the whole people against them; what left them not a single defender

among so many noble families to which they were related, — was this monstrous accusation of denying and spitting on the cross. This was precisely the accusation which was admitted by the greatest number of the accused. The simple statement of the fact turned every one against them: everybody crossed himself, and refused to hear another word. Thus the order, which had represented in the most eminent degree the symbolical genius of the middle age, died of a symbol misunderstood." — Vol. iii. p. 206.

From this time the history of France is not, except in a much more indirect manner, the history of Europe and of civilization. The subordination of the Church to the State once fully established, the next period was mainly characterized by the struggles between the king and the barons, and final victory of the crown. On this subject, France cannot represent English history, where the crown was ultimately the defeated instead of the victorious party; and the incidents of the contest are necessarily national, not European incidents. Here, therefore, having regard also to our necessary limits, our extracts from M. Michelet's work may suitably close; although the succeeding volumes, which come down nearly to Louis XI., are not inferior in merit to those from which we have quoted; and are even, as we before remarked, superior in the value of their materials; being grounded, in a great measure, on the public documents of the period, and not, like previous histories, almost exclusively on the chronicles.

In what we have said, we have been far more desirous to make the work known, and recommend it to notice,

than to criticise it. The latter could only become a needful service after the former had been accomplished. The faults, whether of matter or manner, of which M. Michelet can be accused, are not such as require being pointed out to English readers. There is much more danger lest they should judge too strictly the speculations of such a man, and turn impatiently from the germs of truth which often lurk even in the errors of a man of genius. This is, indeed, the more to be apprehended, as M. Michelet, apparently, has by no means the fear of an unsympathizing audience before his eyes. Where we require thoughts, he often gives us only allusions to thoughts. We continually come upon sentences, and even single expressions, which take for granted a whole train of previous speculation, — often perfectly just, and perhaps familiar to French readers, but which in England would certainly have required to be set forth in terms, and cleared up by explanations.

His style cannot be fairly judged from the specimens we have exhibited. Our extracts were selected as specimens of his ideas, not of his literary merits; and none have been taken from the narrative part, which is, of course, the principal part of the work, and the most decisive test of powers of composition in a writer of history. We should say, however, of the style generally, that it is sparkling rather than flowing; full of expressiveness, but too continuously epigrammatic to carry the reader easily along with it; and pushing that ordinary artifice of modern French composition, the personification of abstractions, to an almost startling extent. It is not, however, though it is very likely to be taken for, an affected style: for affectation cannot be

justly imputed, where the words are chosen, as is evidently the case here, for no purpose but to express ideas; and where, consequently, the mode of expression, however peculiar, grows from, and corresponds to, the peculiarities of the mode of thought.

THE CLAIMS OF LABOR.\*

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"PERSONS of a thoughtful mind," says the introduction to this little volume, "seeing closely the falsehood, the folly, and the arrogance of the age in which they live, are apt, occasionally, to have a great contempt for it; and I doubt not that many a man looks upon the present time as one of feebleness and degeneracy. There are, however, signs of an increased solicitude for the claims of labor, which, of itself, is a thing of the highest promise, and more to be rejoiced over than all the mechanical triumphs which both those who would magnify, and those who would depreciate, the present age, would be apt to point to as containing its especial significance and merit."

It is true, that many are now inquiring, more earnestly than heretofore, "how the great mass of the people are fed, clothed, and taught; and whether the improvement in their condition corresponds at all with the improvement of the condition of the middle and upper classes." And many are of opinion, with the writer from whom we quote, that the answer which can be given to these questions is an unsatisfactory one. Nor is the newly-awakened interest in the condition of the laboring people confined to persons, like this author,

\* Edinburgh Review, April, 1845. [Part of a review of a work entitled "The Claims of Labor: An Essay on the Duties of the Employers to the Employed."]

of feeling and reflection. To its claims upon the conscience and philanthropy of the more favored classes, to its ever-strengthening demands upon their sense of self-interest, this cause now adds the more ephemeral attractions of the last new fashion. The claims of labor have become the question of the day: the current of public meetings, subscriptions, and associations, has, for some time, set strongly in that direction; and many minor topics which previously occupied the public mind have either merged into that question, or been superseded by it. Even the Legislature, which seldom concerns itself much with new tendencies of opinion until they have grown too powerful to be safely overlooked, is invited, in each session with increasing urgency, to provide that the laboring classes shall earn more, work less, or have their lot in some other manner alleviated; and, in each session, yields more or less cheerfully, but still yields, though slowly, yet increasingly, to the requisition.

That this impulse is salutary and promising, few will deny; but it would be idle to suppose that it has not its peculiar dangers, or that the business of doing good can be the only one for which zeal suffices, without knowledge or circumspection. A change from wrong to right, even in little things, is not so easy to make as to wish for and to talk about. Society cannot with safety, in one of its gravest concerns, pass at once from selfish supineness to restless activity. It has a long and difficult apprenticeship yet to serve; during which we shall be often reminded of the *dictum* of Fontenelle, that mankind only settle into the right course after passing through and exhausting all the

varieties of error. But, however this may be, the movement is not therefore to be damped or discouraged. If, in the attempt to benefit the laboring classes, we are destined to see great mistakes committed in practice, as so many errors are already advocated in theory, let us not lay the blame upon excess of zeal. The danger is, that people in general will care enough for the object to be willing to sacrifice other people's interest to it, but not their own; and that the few who lead will make the sacrifice of their money, their time, even their bodily ease, in the cause, but will not do for its sake what to most men is so much more difficult, — undergo the formidable labor of thought.

For several reasons, it will be useful to trace back this philanthropic movement to its small and unobvious beginnings; to note its fountain-head, and show what mingled streams have, from time to time, swelled its course.

We are inclined to date its origin from an event which would, in vulgar apprehension, seem to have a less title to that than to any other honorable distinction, — the appearance of Mr. Malthus's "Essay on Population." Though the assertion may be looked upon as a paradox, it is historically true, that only from that time has the economical condition of the laboring classes been regarded by thoughtful men as susceptible of permanent improvement. We know that this was not the inference originally drawn from the truth propounded by Mr. Malthus. Even by himself, that truth was at first announced as an inexorable law, which, by perpetuating the poverty and degradation of the mass of mankind, gave a *quietus* to the visions



of indefinite social improvement which had agitated so fiercely a neighboring nation. To these supposed corollaries from Mr. Malthus's principle, it was, we believe, indebted for its early success with the more opulent classes, and for much of its lasting unpopularity with the poorer. But this view of its tendencies only continued to prevail while the theory itself was but imperfectly understood, and now lingers nowhere but in those dark corners into which no subsequent lights have penetrated. The first promulgator of a truth is not always the best judge of its tendencies and consequences; but Mr. Malthus early abandoned the mistaken inferences he had at first drawn from his celebrated principle, and adopted the very different views now almost unanimously professed by those who recognize his doctrine.

So long as the necessary relation between the numbers of the laboring population and their wages had escaped attention, the poverty, bordering on destitution, of the great mass of mankind, being an universal fact, was (by one of those natural illusions from which human reason is still so incompletely emancipated) conceived to be inevitable; a provision of nature, and, as some said, an ordinance of God; a part of human destiny, susceptible merely of partial alleviation, in individual cases, from public or private charity. The only persons by whom any other opinion seemed to be entertained were those who prophesied advancements in physical knowledge and mechanical art, sufficient to alter the fundamental conditions of man's existence on earth; or who professed the doctrine, that poverty is a factitious thing, produced by the tyranny and

rapacity of governments and of the rich. Even so recent a thinker, and one so much in advance of his predecessors, as Adam Smith, went no further than to say, that the laborers might be well off in a rapidly progressive state of the public wealth, — a state which has never yet comprehended more than a small portion of the earth's surface at once, and can nowhere last indefinitely: but that they must be pinched and in a condition of hardship in the stationary state; which in a finite world, composed of matter not changeable in its properties, is the state towards which things must be at all times tending. The ideas, therefore, of the most enlightened men, anterior to Mr. Malthus, led really to the discouraging anticipations for which his doctrine has been made accountable. But these anticipations vanished so soon as the truths brought to light by Mr. Malthus were correctly understood. It was then seen, that the capabilities of increase of the human species, as of animal nature in general (being far greater than those of subsistence under any except very unusual circumstances), must be, and are, controlled, everywhere else, by one of two limiting principles, — starvation, or prudence and conscience; that, under the operation of this conflict, the reward of ordinary unskilled labor is always and everywhere (saving temporary variations, and rare conjunctions of circumstances) at the lowest point to which the laborers will consent to be reduced, — the point below which they will not choose to propagate their species; that this minimum, though everywhere much too low for human happiness and dignity, is different in different places, and in different ages of the world, and, in an improving country, has, on the whole,

a tendency to rise. These considerations furnished a sufficient explanation of the state of extreme poverty in which the majority of mankind had almost everywhere been found, without supposing any inherent necessity in the case; any universal cause, other than the causes which have made human progress altogether so imperfect and slow as it is. And the explanation afforded a sure hope, that whatever accelerates that progress would tell with full effect upon the physical condition of the laboring classes. Whatever raises the civilization of the people at large; whatever accustoms them to require a higher standard of subsistence, comfort, taste, and enjoyment, — affords of itself, according to this encouraging view of human prospects, the means of satisfying the wants which it engenders. In every moral or intellectual benefit conferred upon the mass of the people, this doctrine teaches us to see an assurance also of their physical advantage: a means of enabling them to improve their worldly circumstances; not in the vulgar way of "rising in the world," so often recommended to them; not by endeavoring to escape out of their class, as if to live by manual labor were a fate only endurable as a step to something else; but by raising the class itself in physical well-being and in self-estimation. These are the prospects which the vilified population-principle has opened to mankind. True, indeed, the doctrine teaches this further lesson: that any attempt to produce the same result by other means; any scheme of beneficence which trusts for its moving power to any thing but to the influence over the minds and habits of the people, which it either directly aims at, or may happen indirectly to promote, — might, for any *general* effect of a benefi-

cial kind which it can produce, as well be let alone. And the doctrine being brought thus into conflict with those plans of easy beneficence which accord so well with the inclinations of man, but so ill with the arrangements of nature, we need not wonder that the epithets of "Malthusians" and "Political Economists" are so often considered equivalent to "hard-hearted," "unfeeling," and "enemies of the poor;" accusations so far from being true, that no thinkers, of any pretensions to sobriety, cherish such hopeful views of the future social position of labor, or have so long made the permanent increase of its remuneration the turning-point of their political speculations, as those who most broadly acknowledge the doctrine of Malthus.

But, if the permanent place now occupied in the minds of thinking men by the question of improving the condition of the laboring classes may be dated from the new light cast by Malthus's speculations upon the determining laws of that condition, other causes are needful to account for the popularity of the subject as one of the topics of the day; and we believe they will be found in the stir and commotion of the national mind, consequent upon the passing of the Reform Bill.

It was foretold during the Reform crisis, that, when the consequences of the bill should have had time to manifest themselves, the direct effects, with which all mouths were filled, would prove unimportant compared with those indirect effects which were never mentioned in discussion, and which hardly any one seemed to think of. The prophecy has been signally verified. Considered as a great constitutional change, both friends and enemies now seem rather surprised that they should

have ascribed so much efficacy to the bill for good or for evil. But its indirect consequences have surpassed every calculation. The series of events commencing with Catholic Emancipation, and consummated by the Reform Act, brought home for the first time to the existing generation a practical consciousness of living in a world of change. It gave the first great shock to old habits. It was to politics what the Reformation was to religion: it made reason the recognized standard instead of authority. By making it evident to the public that they were on a new sea, it destroyed the force of the instinctive objection to new courses. Reforms have still to encounter opposition from those whose interests they affect, or seem to affect; but innovation is no longer under a ban, merely as innovation. The existing system has lost its *prestige*: it has ceased to be the system which Tories had been taught to venerate, and has not become that which Liberals were accustomed to desire. When any wide-spread social evil was brought before minds thus prepared, there was such a chance as there had not been for the last two hundred years, of its being examined with a real desire to find a remedy, or at least without a predetermination to leave things alone. That the evils of the condition of the working classes should be brought before the mind of the nation in the most emphatic manner, was the care of those classes themselves. Their "petition of grievances" was embodied in the People's Charter.

The democratic movement among the operative classes, commonly known as "Chartism," was the first open separation of interest, feeling, and opinion, between the laboring portion of the commonwealth and

all above them. It was the revolt of nearly all the active talent, and a great part of the physical force, of the working classes, against their whole relation to society. Conscientious and sympathizing minds among the ruling classes could not but be strongly impressed by such a protest. They could not but ask themselves, with misgiving, what there was to say in reply to it; how the existing social arrangements could best be justified to those who deemed themselves aggrieved by them. It seemed highly desirable that the benefits derived from those arrangements by the poor should be made less questionable, — should be such as could not easily be overlooked. If the poor had reason for their complaints, the higher classes had not fulfilled their duties as governors; if they had no reason, neither had those classes fulfilled their duties in allowing them to grow up so ignorant and uncultivated as to be open to these mischievous delusions. While one sort of minds among the more fortunate classes were thus influenced by the political claims put forth by the operatives, there was another description upon whom that phenomenon acted in a different manner; leading, however, to the same result. While some, by the physical and moral circumstances which they saw around them, were made to feel that the condition of the laboring classes *ought* to be attended to, others were made to see that it *would* be attended to, whether they wished to be blind to it or not. The victory of 1832, due to the manifestation, though without the actual employment, of physical force, had taught a lesson to those who, from the nature of the case, have always the physical force on their side; and who only wanted the organization, which they were

rapidly acquiring, to convert their physical power into a moral and social one. It was no longer disputable that something must be done to render the multitude more content with the existing state of things.

Ideas, unless outward circumstances conspire with them, have in general no very rapid or immediate efficacy in human affairs; and the most favorable outward circumstances may pass by, or remain inoperative, for want of ideas suitable to the conjuncture; but, when the right circumstances and the right ideas meet, the effect is seldom slow in manifesting itself. In the posture of things which has been described, we attribute considerable effect to certain writers, by whom what many were either thinking, or prepared to think, was for the first time expressly proclaimed. Among these must be reckoned Mr. Carlyle, whose "Chartism" and "Past and Present" were openly, what much of his previous writings had been incidentally, an indignant remonstrance with the higher classes on their sins of omission against the lower, contrasted with what he deemed the superior efficiency, in that relation, of the rulers in older times. On both these points, he has met with auxiliaries from a directly opposite point of the political horizon; from those whom a spirit of reaction against the democratic tendencies of the age had flung off, with the greatest violence, in the direction of feudal and sacerdotal ascendancy. As in the Stuart times there were said to be Church Puritans and State Puritans, so there are now Church Puseyites, and what may be called State Puseyites: men who look back with fondness to times when the poor had no notion of any other social state than to give obedience to the

nearest great landholder, and receive protection; and who assert, in the mean time, the right of the poor to protection, in hopes that the obedience will follow.

To complete the explanation of this increase of sympathy for the poor, it ought to be noticed, that, until lately, few were adequately aware of their real condition. The agitation against the Poor Law, bad as it was and is, both in its objects and in its effects, had in it this good,—that it incessantly invited attention to the details of distress. The inquiries emanating from the Poor-law Commission, and the official investigations of the last few years, brought to light many facts which made a great impression upon the public; and the poverty and wretchedness of great masses of people were incidentally unveiled by the struggles of parties respecting the Corn Laws. The agriculturists attempted to turn the tables upon their opponents by highly-colored pictures of the sufferings and degradation of the factory operatives; and the League repaid the attack with interest, by sending emissaries into the rural districts, and publishing the deplorable poverty of the agricultural laborers.

From these multifarious causes a feeling has been awakened, which would soon be as influential in elections as the antislavery movement some years ago; and dispose of funds equal to those of the missionary societies, had it but as definite an object. The stream at present flows in a multitude of small channels. Societies for the protection of needlewomen, of governesses; associations to improve the buildings of the laboring classes, to provide them with baths, with parks and promenades,—have started into existence. Legislative



interference to abridge the hours of labor in manufactories has obtained large minorities, and once a passing majority, in the House of Commons; and attempts are multiplying to obtain, by the consent of employers, a similar abridgment in many departments of retail trade. In the rural districts, every expedient, practicable or not, for giving work to the unemployed, finds advocates; public meetings for the discussion and comparison of projects have lately been frequent; and the movement towards the "allotment system" is becoming general.

If these and other modes of relieving distress were looked upon simply in the light of ordinary charity, they would not fill the large space they do in public discussion, and would not demand any special comment. To give money in alms has never been, either in this country or in most others, a rare virtue. Charitable institutions, and subscriptions for relief of the destitute, already abounded; and if new forms of suffering, or classes of sufferers previously overlooked, were brought into notice, nothing was more natural than to do for them what had already been done for others. People usually give alms to gratify their feelings of compassion, or to discharge what they think their duty by giving of their superfluity to alleviate the wants of individual sufferers; and beyond this they do not, nor are they, in general, qualified to look. But it is not in this spirit that the new schemes of benevolence are conceived. They are propounded as instalments of a great social reform. They are celebrated as the beginning of a new moral order, or an old order revived, in which the possessors of property are to resume their place as

the paternal guardians of those less fortunate; and which, when established, is to cause peace and union throughout society, and to extinguish, not indeed poverty, — that hardly seems to be thought desirable, — but the more abject forms of vice, destitution, and physical wretchedness. What has hitherto been *done* in this brilliant career of improvement is of very little importance compared with what is *said*; with the objects held up to pursuit, and the theories avowed. These are not now confined to speculative men and professed philanthropists. They are made familiar to every reader of newspapers by sedulous inculcation from day to day.

It is therefore not superfluous to consider whether these theories, and the expectations built upon them, are rational or chimerical; whether the attempt to carry them out would in the end be found to accord or conflict with the nature of man, and of the world in which he is cast. It would be unfair to the theorists to try them by any thing which has been commenced, or even projected. Were they asked if they expect any good to the general interest of the laboring people from a Laborers'-friend Society or a Society for Distressed Needlewomen, they would, of course, answer that they do not; that these are but the first leaf-buds of what they hope to nourish into a stately and spreading tree; that they do not limit their intentions to mitigating the evils of a low remuneration of labor, but must have a high remuneration, — in the words of the operatives in the late disturbance, "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work;" that they hope to secure this, and will be contented with nothing short of it. Here, then, is a ground on which we can fairly meet

them. That object is ours also. The question is of means, not ends. Let us look a little into the means they propose.

Their theory appears to be, in few words, this,— that it is the proper function of the possessors of wealth, and especially of the employers of labor and the owners of land, to take care that the laboring people are well off; that they ought always to pay good wages; that they ought to withdraw their custom, their patronage, and any other desirable thing at their disposal, from all employers who will not do the like; that, at these good wages, they ought to give employment to as great a number of persons as they can afford, and to make them work for no greater number of hours in the twenty-four than is compatible with comfort, and with leisure for recreation and improvement. That, if they have land or houses to be let to tenants, they should require and accept no higher rents than can be paid with comfort; and should be ready to build, at such rents as can be conveniently paid, warm, airy, healthy, and spacious cottages, for any number of young couples who may ask for them.

All this is not said in direct terms; but something very little short of it is. These principles form the standard by which we daily see the conduct, both of classes and of individuals, measured and condemned; and, if these principles are not true, the new doctrines are without a meaning. It is allowable to take this picture as a true likeness of the "new moral world" which the present philanthropic movement aims at calling into existence.

Mankind are often cautioned by divines and moralists

against unreasonableness in their expectations. We attach greater value to the more limited warning against inconsistency in them. The state of society which this picture represents is a conceivable one. We shall not at present inquire if it is of all others the most eligible one, even as an Utopia. We only ask if its promoters are willing to accept this state of society, together with its inevitable accompaniments.

It is quite possible to impose, as a moral or a legal obligation, upon the higher classes, that they shall be answerable for the well-doing and well-being of the lower. There have been times and places in which this has in some measure been done. States of society exist, in which it is the recognized duty of every owner of land, not only to see that all who dwell and work thereon are fed, clothed, and housed in a sufficient manner, but to be, in so full a sense, responsible for their good conduct, as to indemnify all other persons for any damage they do, or offence they may commit. This must surely be the ideal state of society which the new philanthropists are contending for. Who are the happy laboring classes who enjoy the blessings of these wise ordinances? The Russian boors. There are other laborers, not merely tillers of the soil, but workers in great establishments partaking of the nature of manufactories, for whom the laws of our own country, even in our own time, compelled their employers to find wholesome food, and sufficient lodging and clothing. Who were these? The slaves on a West-Indian estate. The relation sought to be established between the landed and manufacturing classes and the laborers is therefore by no means unexampled.

The former have before now been forced to maintain the latter, and to provide work for them, or support them in idleness. But this obligation never has existed, and never will nor can exist, without, as a countervailing element, absolute power, or something approaching to it, in those who are bound to afford this support, over those entitled to receive it. Such a relation has never existed between human beings, without immediate degradation to the character of the dependent class. Shall we take another example, in which things are not carried quite so far as this? There are governments in Europe who look upon it as part of their duty to take care of the physical well-being and comfort of the people. The Austrian Government, in its German dominions, does so. Several of the minor German governments do so. But with paternal care is connected paternal authority. In these States we find severe restrictions on marriage. No one is permitted to marry, unless he satisfies the authorities that he has a rational prospect of being able to support a family.

Thus much, at least, it might have been expected that the apostles of the new theory would have been prepared for. They cannot mean that the working classes should combine the liberty of action of independent citizens with the immunities of slaves. There are but two modes of social existence for human beings: they must be left to the natural consequences of their mistakes in life, or society must guard against the mistakes by prevention or punishment. Which will the new philanthropists have? If it is really to be incumbent, on whoever have more than a mere subsist-

ence, to give, so far as their means enable them, good wages and comfortable homes to all who present themselves, it is not surely intended that these should be permitted to follow the instinct of multiplication at the expense of others, until all are reduced to the same level as themselves. We should therefore have expected that the philanthropists would have accepted the condition, and contended for such a measure of restriction as might prevent the good they meditate from producing an overbalance of evil. To our surprise, we find them the great sticklers for the domestic liberty of the poor. The outcry against the Poor Law finds among them its principal organs. Far from being willing that a man should be subject, when out of the poorhouse, to any restraints other than his own prudence may dictate, they will not submit to its being imposed upon him while actually supported at the expense of others. It is they who talk of Union Bastiles. They cannot bear that even a work-house should be a place of regulation and discipline; that any extrinsic restraint should be applied even there. Their bitterest quarrel with the present system of relief is, that it enforces the separation of the sexes.

The higher and middle classes might and ought to be willing to submit to a very considerable sacrifice of their own means, for improving the condition of the existing generation of laborers, if by this they could hope to provide similar advantages for the generation to come. But why should they be called upon to make these sacrifices, merely that the country may contain a greater number of people, in as great poverty and as great liability to destitution as now? If whoever has too little

is to come to them to make it more, there is no alternative but restrictions on marriage, combined with such severe penalties on illegitimate births as it would hardly be possible to enforce under a social system in which all grown persons are, nominally at least, their own masters. Without these provisions, the millennium promised would, in little more than a generation, sink the people of any country in Europe to one level of poverty. If, then, it is intended that the law, or the persons of property, should assume a control over the multiplication of the people, tell us so plainly, and inform us how you propose to do it. But it will doubtless be said, that nothing of this sort would be enduring; that such things are not to be dreamt of in the state of English society and opinion; that the spirit of equality, and the love of individual independence, have so pervaded even the poorest class, that they would not take plenty to eat and drink at the price of having their most personal concerns regulated for them by others. If this be so, all schemes for withdrawing wages from the control of supply and demand, or raising the people by other means than by such changes in their minds and habits as shall make them fit guardians of their own physical condition, are schemes for combining incompatibilities. They ought on proper conditions to be shielded, we hope they already are so, by public or private charity, from actual want of mere necessaries, and from any other extreme of bodily suffering; but if the whole income of the country were divided among them in wages or poor-rates, still, until there is a change in themselves, there can be no lasting improvement in their outward condition.

And how is this change to be effected, while we continue inculcating upon them that their wages are to be regulated for them, and that to keep wages high is other people's business, and not theirs? All classes are ready enough, without prompting, to believe that whatever ails them is not their fault, but the crime of somebody else; and that they are granting an indemnity to the crime if they attempt to get rid of the evil by any effort or sacrifice of their own. The National Assembly of France has been much blamed for talking in a rhetorical style about the rights of man, and neglecting to say any thing about the duties. The same error is now in the course of being repeated with respect to the rights of poverty. It would surely be no derogation from any one's philanthropy to consider, that it is one thing to tell the rich that they ought to take care of the poor, and another thing to tell the poor that the rich ought to take care of them; and that it is rather idle in these days to suppose that a thing will not be overheard by the poor, because it is not designed for their ears. It is most true, that the rich have much to answer for in their conduct to the poor; but, in the matter of their poverty, there is no way in which the rich *could* have helped them, but by inducing them to help themselves; and if, while we stimulate the rich to repair this omission, we do all that depends on us to inculcate upon the poor that they need not attend to the lesson, we must be little aware of the sort of feelings and doctrines with which the minds of the poor are already filled. If we go on in this course, we may succeed in bursting society asunder by a Socialist revolution; but the poor, and their poverty, we shall leave worse than we found them.



The first remedy, then, is to abstain from directly counteracting our own end. The second, and most obvious, is education. And this, indeed, is not the principal, but the sole remedy, if understood in its widest sense. Whatever acts upon the minds of the laboring classes is properly their education. But their minds, like those of other people, are acted upon by the whole of their social circumstances; and often the part of their education which is least efficacious as such is that which goes by the name.

Yet, even in that comparatively narrow sense, too much stress can hardly be laid upon its importance. We have scarcely seen more than the small beginnings of what might be effected for the country, even by mere schooling. The religious rivalries, which are the unhappy price the course of our history has compelled us to pay for such religious liberty as we possess, have as yet thwarted every attempt to make this benefit universal. But, if the children of different religious bodies cannot be instructed together, each can be instructed apart. And if we may judge from the zeal manifested, and the sums raised, both by the Church and by Dissenters, since the abandonment of the government measure two years ago, there is no deficiency of pecuniary means for the support of schools, even without the aid which the State certainly will not refuse. Unfortunately there is something wanting which pecuniary means will not supply. There is a lack of sincere desire to attain the end. There have been schools enough in England, these thirty years, to have regenerated the people, if, wherever the means were found, the end had been desired. But it is not always where there are schools that

there is a wish to educate. There may be a wish that children should learn to read the Bible, and, in the Church schools, to repeat the Catechism. In most cases, there is little desire that they should be taught more; in many, a decided objection to it. Schoolmasters, like other public officers, are seldom inclined to do more than is exacted from them; but we believe that teaching the poor is almost the only public duty in which the payers are more a check than a stimulant to the zeal of their own agents. A teacher whose heart is in the work, and who attempts any enlargement of the instruction, often finds his greatest obstacle in the fears of the patrons and managers lest the poor should be "over-educated;" and is driven to the most absolute evasions to obtain leave to teach the common rudiments of knowledge. The four rules of arithmetic are often only tolerated through ridiculous questions about Jacob's lambs, or the number of the apostles or of the patriarchs; and geography can only be taught through maps of Palestine, to children who have yet to learn that the earth consists of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. A person must be beyond being argued with, who believes that this is the way to teach religion, or that a child will be made to understand the Bible by being taught to understand nothing else. We forbear to comment on the instances in which Church schools have been opened, solely that, through the influence of superiors, the children might be drawn away from a Dissenting school already existing; and, as soon as that was shut up, the rival establishment, having attained its end, has been allowed to fall into disuse.

This spirit could never be tolerated by any person

of honest intentions, who knew the value of even the commonest knowledge to the poor. We know not how the case may be in other countries, among a more quick-witted people; but, in England, it would hardly be believed to what a degree all that is morally objectionable in the lowest class of the working people is nourished, if not engendered, by the low state of their understandings. Their infantine credulity to what they hear, when it is from their own class; their incapacity to observe what is before their eyes; their inability to comprehend or believe purposes in others which they have not been taught to expect, and are not conscious of in themselves, — are the known characteristics of persons of low intellectual faculties in all classes. But what would not be equally credible without experience, is an amount of deficiency in the power of reasoning and calculation, which makes them insensible to their own direct personal interests. Few have considered how any one who could instil into these people the commonest worldly wisdom — who could render them capable of even selfish prudential calculations — would improve their conduct in every relation of life, and clear the soil for the growth of right feelings and worthy propensities.

To know what schools may do, we have but to think of what the Scottish Parochial Schools have formerly done. The progress of wealth and population has outgrown the machinery of these schools; and, in the towns especially, they no longer produce their full fruits: but what do not the peasantry of Scotland owe to them? For two centuries, the Scottish peasant, compared with the same class in other situations, has been

a reflecting, an observing, and therefore naturally a self-governing, a moral, and a successful human being, because he has been a reading and a discussing one; and this he owes, above all other causes, to the parish schools. What, during the same period, have the English peasantry been?

Let us be assured, that too much opportunity cannot be given to the poor of exercising their faculties, nor too great a variety of ideas placed within their reach. We hail, therefore, the cheap libraries, which are supplying even the poorest with matter more or less instructive, and, what is of equal importance, calculated to interest their minds. But it is not only, or even principally, books and book-learning that constitutes education for the working or for any other class. Schools for reading are but imperfect things, unless systematically united with schools of industry; not to improve them as workmen merely, but as human beings. It is by action that the faculties are called forth, more than by words; more, at least, than by words unaccompanied by action. We want schools in which the children of the poor should learn to use, not only their hands, but their minds for the guidance of their hands; in which they should be trained to the actual adaptation of means to ends; should become familiar with the accomplishment of the same object by various processes, and be made to apprehend with their intellects in what consists the difference between the right way of performing industrial operations and the wrong. Meanwhile, they would acquire, not only manual dexterity, but habits of order and regularity, of the utmost use in after-life, and which have more to do with the formation

of character than many persons are aware of. Such things would do much more than is usually believed towards converting these neglected creatures into rational beings, — beings capable of foresight, accessible to reasons and motives addressed to their understanding, and therefore not governed by the utterly senseless modes of feeling and action which so much astonish educated and observing persons when brought into contact with them.

But when education, in this its narrow sense, has done its best, and even to enable it to do its best, an education of another sort is required, such as schools cannot give. What is taught to a child at school will be of little effect, if the circumstances which surround the grown man or woman contradict the lesson. We may cultivate his understanding; but what if he cannot employ it without becoming discontented with his position, and disaffected to the whole order of things in which he is cast? Society educates the poor, for good or for ill, by its conduct to them, even more than by direct teaching. A sense of this truth is the most valuable feature in the new philanthropic agitation; and the recognition of it is important, whatever mistakes may be at first made in practically applying it.

In the work before us, and in the best of the other writings which have appeared lately on the philanthropic side of the subject, a strong conviction is expressed, that there can be no healthful state of society, and no social or even physical welfare for the poor, where there is no relation between them and the rich except the payment of wages and (we may add) the receipt of charity;

no sense of co-operation and common interest between those natural associates who are now called the employers and the employed. In part of this we agree, though we think the case not a little overstated. A well-educated laboring class could, and we believe would, keep up its condition to a high standard of comfort, or at least at a great distance from physical destitution, by the exercise of the same degree of habitual prudence now commonly practised by the middle class; among whom the responsibilities of a family are rarely incurred without some prospect of being able to maintain it with the customary decencies of their station. We believe, too, that, if this were the case, the poor could do very well without those incessant attentions on the part of the rich which constitute the new whole duty of man to his poorer neighbor. Seeing no necessary reason why the poor should be hopelessly dependent, we do not look upon them as permanent subjects for the exercise of those peculiar virtues which are essentially intended to mitigate the humiliation and misery of dependence; but the need of greater fellow-feeling, and community of interest, between the mass of the people and those who are by courtesy considered to guide and govern them, does not require the aid of exaggeration. We yield to no one in our wish that "cash payment" should be no longer "the universal *nexus* between man and man;" that the employers and employed should have the feelings of friendly allies, not of hostile rivals whose gain is each other's loss. But while we agree, so far, with the new doctrines, it seems to us that some of those who preach them are looking in the wrong quarter for what they seek. The social relations of

former times, and those of the present, not only are not, but cannot possibly be, the same. The essential requirements of human nature may be alike in all ages; but each age has its own appropriate means of satisfying them. Feudality, in whatever manner we may conceive it modified, is not the type on which institutions or habits can now be moulded. The age that produces railroads, which, for a few shillings, will convey a laborer and his family fifty miles to find work; in which agricultural laborers read newspapers, and make speeches at public meetings called by themselves to discuss low wages, — is not an age in which a man can feel loyal and dutiful to another because he has been born on his estate. Obedience in return for protection is a bargain only made when protection can be had on no other terms. Men now make that bargain with society, not with an individual. The law protects them, and they give their obedience to that. Obedience in return for wages is a different matter. They will make that bargain too, if necessity drives them to it. But good-will and gratitude form no part of the conditions of such a contract. The deference which a man now pays to his "brother of the earth," merely because the one was born rich and the other poor, is either hypocrisy or servility. Real attachment, a genuine feeling of subordination, must now be the result of personal qualities, and requires them on both sides equally. Where these are wanting, in proportion to the enforced observances will be the concealed enmity; not, perhaps, towards the individual, for there will seldom be the extremes either of hatred or of affection in a relation so merely transitory, but that *sourde* animosity

which is universal in this country towards the whole class of employers, in the whole class of the employed.

As one of the correctives to this deep-seated alienation of feeling, much stress is laid on the importance of personal demeanor. In the "Claims of Labor," this is the point most insisted upon. The book contains numerous aphorisms on this subject; and they are such as might be expected from the author of "Essays written in the Intervals of Business," and "Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd." A person disposed to criticise might indeed object, that these earnest and thoughtful sayings are chiefly illustrative of the duty of every one to every one; and are applicable to the formation of our own character, and to human relations generally, rather than to the special relation between the rich and the poor. It is not as concerning the poor specially that these lessons are needed. The faults of the rich to the poor are the universal faults. The demeanor fitting towards the poor is that which is fitting towards every one. It is a just charge against the English nation, considered generally, that they do not know how to be kind, courteous, and considerate of the feelings of others. It is their character throughout Europe. They have much to learn from other nations in the arts not only of being serviceable and amiable with grace, but of being so at all. Whatever brings the habitual feelings of human beings to one another nearer to the Christian standard will produce a better demeanor to every one, and therefore to the poor. But it is not peculiarly towards them that the deficiency manifests itself. On the contrary, speaking of the rich individually (as distinguished from collective conduct



in public life), there is generally, we believe, a very sincere desire to be amiable to the poor.

Where there exists the quality, so rare in England, of genuine sociability, combined with as much knowledge of the feelings and ways of the working classes as can enable any one to show interest in them to any useful purpose, the effects obtained are even now very valuable. The author of the "Claims of Labor" has done a useful thing by giving additional publicity to the proceedings of a generous and right-minded mill-owner, whom he does not name, but who is known to be Mr. Samuel Greg, from whose letters to Mr. Leonard Horner he has quoted largely. Mr. Greg proceeded partly in the obvious course of building good cottages, granting garden allotments, establishing schools, and so forth. But the essence of his plan consisted in becoming personally acquainted with the operatives, showing interest in their pursuits, taking part in their social amusements, and giving to the *élite* of them—men, women, and young persons—periodical access to the society and intercourse of his own home. He has afforded a specimen and model of what can be done for the people under the calumniated Factory System. And in nothing is he more to be commended than in the steadiness with which he upholds the one essential principle of all effectual philanthropy. "The motto on our flag," says he, "is *Aide-toi, le Ciel t'aidera*. It is the principle I endeavor to keep constantly in view. It is the only principle on which it is safe to help anybody, or which can prevent benevolence from being poisoned into a fountain of moral mischief." His experiment has, for many years, been well rewarded by

success. But, for the cure of great social evils, too great stress must not be laid upon it. The originator of such a scheme is, most likely, a person peculiarly fitted by natural and acquired qualifications for winning the confidence and attachment of untutored minds. If the spirit should diffuse itself widely among the employers of labor, there might be, in every large neighborhood, some such man : we could never expect that the majority would be such. Even Mr. Greg had to begin, as he tells us, by *selecting* his laborers. He had to "get rid of his aborigines." He "endeavored, as far as possible, to find such families as we knew to be respectable, or thought likely to be so, and who, we hoped, if they were made comfortable, would remain and settle upon the place; thus finding and making themselves a home, and losing by degrees that restless and migratory spirit which is one of the peculiar characteristics of the manufacturing population, and perhaps the greatest of all obstacles in the way of permanent improvement among them." It is in the nature of things, that employers so much beyond the average should gather round them better laborers than the average, and retain them, while so eligible a lot is not to be had elsewhere. But ordinary human nature is so poor a thing, that the same attachment and influence would not, with the same certainty, attend similar conduct, if it no longer formed a contrast with the indifference of other employers. The gratitude of men is for things unusual and unexpected. This does not take from the value of Mr. Greg's exertions. Whoever succeeds in improving a certain number of the working people does so much towards raising the class; and all such good influences

have a tendency to spread. But, for creating a permanent tie between employers and employed, we must not count upon the results manifested in cases of exception, which would probably lose a part of their beneficial efficacy if they became the rule.

If, on a subject on which almost every thinker has his Utopia, we might be permitted to have ours; if we might point to the principle on which, at some distant date, we place our chief hope for healing the widening breach between those who toil and those who live on the produce of former toil, — it would be that of raising the laborer from a receiver of hire — a mere bought instrument in the work of production, having no residuary interest in the work itself — to the position of being, in some sort, a partner in it. The plan of remunerating subordinates in whom trust must be reposed, by a commission on the returns instead of only a fixed salary, is already familiar in mercantile concerns, on the ground of its utility to the employer. The wisdom, even in a worldly sense, of associating the interest of the agent with the end he is employed to attain, is so universally recognized in theory, that it is not chimerical to expect it may one day be more extensively exemplified in practice. In some form of this policy we see the only, or the most practicable, means of harmonizing the "rights of industry" and those of property; of making the employers the real chiefs of the people, leading and guiding them in a work in which they also are interested, — a work of co-operation, not of mere hiring and service; and justifying, by the superior capacity in which they contribute to the work, the higher remuneration which they receive for their share of it.

But without carrying our view forward to changes of manners, or changes in the relation of the different orders of society to one another, let us consider what can be done immediately, and by the Legislature, to improve either the bodily or mental condition of the laboring people.

And let it here be remembered, that we have to do with a class, a large portion of which reads, discusses, and forms opinions on public interests. Let it be remembered, also, that we live in a political age, in which the desire of political rights, or the abuse of political privileges by the possessors of them, are the foremost ideas in the minds of most reading men; an age, too, the whole spirit of which instigates every one to demand fair play for helping himself, rather than to seek or expect help from others. In such an age, and in the treatment of minds so predisposed, justice is the one needful thing rather than kindness. We may at least say that kindness will be little appreciated, will have very little of the effect of kindness upon the objects of it, so long as injustice, or what they cannot but deem to be injustice, is persevered in. Apply this to several of the laws maintained by our Legislature. Apply it, for example, to the Corn Laws. Will the poor thank you for giving them money in alms; for subscribing to build baths and lay out parks for them, or, as Lord John Manners proposes, playing at cricket with them, — if you are at the same time taxing their bread to swell your rents? We could understand persons who said, The people will not be better off, whatever we do; and why should we sacrifice our rents or open our purses for so meagre a result? But we can-

not understand men who give alms with one hand, and take away the bread of the laborer with the other. Can they wonder that the people say, Instead of doling out to us a small fragment of what is rightfully our own, why do you not disgorge your unjust gains? One of the evils of the matter is, that the gains are so enormously exaggerated. Those who have studied the question know that the landlords gain very little by the Corn Laws, and would soon have even that little restored to them by the indirect consequences of the abrogation. The rankling sense of gross injustice, which renders any approximation of feeling between the classes impossible while even the remembrance of it lasts, is inflicted for a quite insignificant pecuniary advantage.

There are some other practices, which, if the new doctrines are embraced in earnest, will require to be reconsidered. For example, it seems to us that mixing in the social assemblies of the country people, and joining in their sports, would assort exceedingly ill with the preserving of game. If cricketing is to be taken in common by rich and poor, why not shooting? We confess, that when we read of enormous game preserves, kept up that great personages may slaughter hundreds of wild animals in a day's shooting, we are amazed at the puerility of taste which can call this a sport; as much as we lament the want of just feeling, which, for the sake of sport, can keep open, from generation to generation, this source of crime and bitterness in the class which it is now so much the fashion to patronize.

We must needs think, also, that there is something out of joint, when so much is said of the value of refining and humanizing tastes to the laboring people;

when it is proposed to plant parks and lay out gardens for them, that they may enjoy more freely nature's gift alike to rich and poor, — of sun, sky, and vegetation; and, along with this, a counter-progress is constantly going on of stopping up paths and enclosing commons. Is not this another case of giving with one hand, and taking back more largely with the other? We look with the utmost jealousy upon any further enclosure of commons. In the greater part of this island, exclusive of the mountain and moor districts, there certainly is not more land remaining in a state of natural wildness than is desirable. Those who would make England resemble many parts of the Continent, where every foot of soil is hemmed in by fences and covered over with the traces of human labor, should remember, that, where this is done, it is done for the use and benefit, not of the rich, but of the poor; and that, in the countries where there remain no commons, the rich have no parks. The common is the peasant's park. Every argument for ploughing it up to raise more produce applies *à fortiori* to the park, which is generally far more fertile. The effect of either, when done in the manner proposed, is only to make the poor more numerous, not better off. But what ought to be said, when, as so often happens, the common is taken from the poor, that the whole or great part of it may be added to the enclosed pleasure-domain of the rich? Is the miserable compensation, and, though miserable, not always granted, of a small scrap of the land to each of the cottagers who had a goose on the common, any equivalent to the poor generally, to the lovers of nature, or to future generations, for this legalized spoliation?

These are things to be avoided. Among things to be done, the most obvious is to remove every restriction, every artificial hinderance, which legal and fiscal systems oppose to the attempts of the laboring classes to forward their own improvement. These hinderances are sometimes to be found in quarters in which they may not be looked for ; as a few instances will show.

Some years ago, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in a well-intended tract addressed to the working people, to correct the prejudices entertained by some of them against the "claims of capital," gave some advice to the laborers, which produced considerable comment at the time. It exhorted them to "make themselves capitalists." To most laboring people who read it, this exhortation probably appeared ironical. But some of the more intelligent of the class found a meaning in it. It did occur to them, that there was a mode in which they could make themselves capitalists. Not, of course, individually ; but by bringing their small means into a common fund, by forming a numerous partnership or joint stock, they could, as it seemed to them, become their own employers, dispense with the agency of receivers of profit, and share among themselves the entire produce of their labor. This was a most desirable experiment. It would have been an excellent thing to have ascertained whether any great industrial enterprise, a manufactory for example, could be successfully carried on upon this principle. If it succeeded, the benefit was obvious ; if, after sufficient trial, it was found impracticable, its failure also would be a valuable lesson. It would prove to the operatives, that the profits of the employer are but the

necessary price paid for the superiority of management produced by the stimulus of individual interest; and that, if the capitalist be the costliest part of the machinery of production, he more than repays his cost. But it was found that the defects of the law of partnership, as applicable to numerous associations, presented difficulties rendering it impracticable to give this experiment a fair trial. Here, then, is a thing which Parliament might do for the laboring classes. The framing of a good law of partnership, giving every attainable facility to the formation of large industrial capitals by the aggregation of small savings, would be a real boon. It would be the removal of no ideal grievance, but of one which we know to be felt, and felt deeply, by the most intelligent and right-thinking of the class; those who are most fitted to acquire, and best qualified to exercise, a beneficent influence over the rest.

Again: it is often complained of, as one of the saddest features of the constitution of society in the rural districts, that the class of yeomanry has died out; that there is no longer any intermediate connecting link between the mere laborer and the large farmer, — no class somewhat above his own, into which, by industry and frugality, a laborer can hope to rise; that, if he makes savings, they are less a benefit to him than a burden and an anxiety, from the absence of any local means of investment; unless, indeed, by becoming a shopkeeper in a town or village where an additional shop is probably not wanted, where he has to form new habits, with great risk of failure, and, if he succeeds, does not remain an example and encouragement to others like himself. Is it not strange, then, that, sup-



posing him to have an opportunity of investing this money in a little patch of land, the Stamp-office would interfere, and take a toll on the transaction? The tax, too, which the State levies on the transfer of small properties, is a trifling matter compared with the tax levied by the lawyers. The stamp-duty bears some proportion to the pecuniary amount: but the law-charges are the same on the smallest transactions as on the greatest; and these are almost wholly occasioned by the defects of the law. There is no real reason why the transfer of land should be more difficult or costly than the transfer of three-per-cent stock, except that more of description is necessary to identify the subject-matter: all the rest is the consequence of mere technicalities, growing out of the obsolete incidents of the feudal system.

Many of the removable causes of ill-health are in the power of government; but there is no need to enlarge upon a subject to which official reports have drawn so much attention. The more effectual performance by government of any of its acknowledged duties, the more zealous prosecution of any scheme tending to the general advantage, is beneficial to the laboring classes. Of schemes destined specially to give them employment, or add to their comforts, it may be said, once for all, that there is a simple test by which to judge them. Is the assistance of such a kind, and given in such a manner, as to render them ultimately independent of the continuance of similar assistance? If not, the best that can be said of the plans is, that they are harmless. To make them useful, it is an indispensable condition that there be a

reasonable prospect of their being at some future time self-supporting. Even upon the best supposition, it appears to us that too much importance is attached to them. Given education and just laws, the poorer class would be as competent as any other class to take care of their own personal habits and requirements.

Aug 31/68.

GUIZOT'S ESSAYS AND LECTURES ON  
HISTORY.\*

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THESE two works are the contributions which the present Minister for Foreign Affairs in France has hitherto made to the philosophy of general history. They are but fragments: the earlier of the two is a collection of detached Essays, and therefore, of necessity, fragmentary; while the later is all that the public possesses, or perhaps is destined to possess, of a systematic work cut short in an early stage of its progress. It would be unreasonable to lament that the exigencies or the temptations of politics have called from authorship and the professor's chair to the Chamber of Deputies and the Cabinet the man to whom perhaps more than to any other it is owing that Europe is now at peace. Yet we cannot forbear wishing that this great service to the civilized world had been the achievement of some other, and that M. Guizot had been allowed to complete his "Cours d'Histoire Moderne." For this a very moderate amount of leisure would probably suffice. For, though M. Guizot has written only on a portion of his subject, he has done it in the manner of one to whom the whole is familiar. There is a consistency, a coherence, a comprehensiveness, and what

\* Edinburgh Review, October, 1845.

the Germans would term many-sidedness, in his view of European history; together with a full possession of the facts which have any important bearing upon his conclusions; and a deliberateness, a matureness, an entire absence of haste or crudity, in his explanations of historical phenomena; which we never see in writers who form their theories as they go on, — which give evidence of a general scheme, so well wrought out and digested beforehand, that the labors, both of research and of thought, necessary for the whole work, seem to have been performed before any part was committed to paper. Little beyond the mere operation of composition seems to be requisite, to place before us, as a connected body of thought, speculations which, even in their unfinished state, may be ranked with the most valuable contributions yet made to universal history.

Of these speculations, no account, having any pretensions to completeness, has ever, so far as we are aware, appeared in the English language. We shall attempt to do something towards supplying the deficiency. To suppose that this is no longer needful, would be to presume too much on the supposed universality of the French language among our reading public; and on the acquaintance, even of those to whom the language opposes no difficulty, with the names and reputation of the standard works of contemporaneous French thought. We believe that a knowledge of M. Guizot's writings is even now not a common possession in this country; and that it is by no means a superfluous service to inform English readers of what they may expect to find there.

For it is not with speculations of this kind as it is with those for which there exists in this country a con-

firmed and long-established taste. What is done in France or elsewhere for the advancement of chemistry or of mathematics is immediately known, and justly appreciated by the mathematicians and chemists of Great Britain. For these are recognized sciences; the chosen occupation of many instructed minds, ever on the watch for any accession of facts or ideas in the department which they cultivate. But the interest which historical studies in this country inspire, is not, as yet, of a scientific character. History with us has not passed that stage in which its cultivation is an affair of mere literature or of erudition, not of science. It is studied for the facts, not for the explanation of facts. It excites an imaginative, or a biographical, or an antiquarian, but not a philosophical, interest. Historical facts are hardly yet felt to be, like other natural phenomena, amenable to scientific laws. The characteristic distrust of our countrymen for all ambitious efforts of intellect, of which the success does not admit of being instantly tested by a decisive application to practice, causes all widely extended views on the explanation of history to be looked upon with a suspicion surpassing the bounds of reasonable caution, and of which the natural result is indifference. And hence we remain in contented ignorance of the best writings which the nations of the Continent have in our time produced; because we have no faith in, and no curiosity about, the kind of speculations to which the most philosophic minds of those nations have lately devoted themselves, even when distinguished, as in the case before us, by a sobriety and a judicious reserve, borrowed from the safest and most cautious school of inductive inquirers.

In this particular, the difference between the English and the Continental mind forces itself upon us in every province of their respective literatures. Certain conceptions of history, considered as a whole; some notions of a progressive unfolding of the capabilities of humanity; of a tendency of man and society towards some distant result; of a *destination*, as it were, of humanity, — pervade, in its whole extent, the popular literature of France. Every newspaper, every literary review or magazine, bears witness of such notions. They are always turning up accidentally, when the writer is ostensibly engaged with something else; or showing themselves as a background behind the opinions which he is immediately maintaining. When the writer's mind is not of a high order, these notions are crude and vague; but they are evidentiary of a tone of thought which has prevailed so long among the superior intellects, as to have spread from them to others, and become the general property of the nation. Nor is this true only of France, and of the nations of Southern Europe which take their tone from France, but almost equally, though under somewhat different forms, of the Germanic nations. It was Lessing by whom the course of history was styled "the education of the human race." Among the earliest of those by whom the succession of historical events was conceived as a subject of science were Herder and Kant. The latest school of German metaphysicians, the Hegelians, are well known to treat of it as a science which might even be constructed *à priori*. And as on other subjects, so on this, the general literature of Germany borrows both its ideas and its tone from the schools of the highest philosophy. We need

hardly say, that, in our own country, nothing of all this is true. The speculations of our thinkers, and the commonplaces of our mere writers and talkers, are of quite another description.

Even insular England belongs, however, to the commonwealth of Europe; and yields, though slowly and in a way of her own, to the general impulse of the European mind. There are signs of a nascent tendency in English thought to turn itself towards speculations on history. The tendency first showed itself in some of the minds which had received their earliest impulse from Mr. Coleridge; and an example has been given in a quarter where many, perhaps, would have least expected it, — by the Oxford school of theologians. However little ambitious these writers may be of the title of philosophers; however anxious to sink the character of science in that of religion, — they yet have, after their own fashion, a philosophy of history. They have a theory of the world, in our opinion an erroneous one, but of which they recognize as an essential condition that it shall explain history; and they do attempt to explain history by it, and have constituted, on the basis of it, a kind of historical system. By this we cannot but think that they have done much good, if only in contributing to impose a similar necessity upon all theorists of like pretensions. We believe the time must come when all systems which aspire to direct either the consciences of mankind, or their political and social arrangements, will be required to show, not only that they are consistent with universal history, but that they afford a more reasonable explanation of it than any other system. In the philosophy of society, more espe-

cially, we look upon history as an indispensable test and verifier of all doctrines and creeds : and we regard with proportionate interest all explanations, however partial, of any important part of the series of historical phenomena, — all attempts, which are in any measure successful, to disentangle the complications of those phenomena ; to detect the order of their causation, and exhibit any portion of them in an unbroken series, each link cemented by natural laws with those which precede and follow it.

M. Guizot's is one of the most successful of these partial efforts. His subject is not history at large, but modern European history ; the formation and progress of the existing nations of Europe. Embracing, therefore, only a part of the succession of historical events, he is precluded from attempting to determine the law or laws which preside over the entire evolution. If there be such laws ; if the series of states through which human nature and society are destined to pass have been determined more or less precisely by the original constitution of mankind, and by the circumstances of the planet on which we live, — the order of their succession cannot be discovered by modern or by European experience alone : it must be ascertained by a conjunct analysis, so far as possible, of the whole of history, and the whole of human nature. M. Guizot stops short of this ambitious enterprise ; but, considered as preparatory studies for promoting and facilitating it, his writings are most valuable. He seeks, not the ultimate but the proximate causes of the facts of modern history : he inquires in what manner each successive condition of modern Europe grew out of that which



next preceded it; and how modern society altogether, and the modern mind, shaped themselves from the elements which had been transmitted to them from the ancient world. To have done this with any degree of success is no trifling achievement.

The Lectures, which are the principal foundation of M. Guizot's literary fame, were delivered by him, in the years 1828, 1829, and 1830, at the old Sorbonne, now the seat of the *Faculté des Lettres* of Paris, on alternate days with MM. Cousin and Villemain; a triad of lecturers, whose brilliant exhibitions, the crowds which thronged their lecture-rooms, and the stir they excited in the active and aspiring minds so numerous among the French youth, the future historian will commemorate as among the remarkable appearances of that important era. The "Essays on the History of France" are the substance of Lectures delivered by M. Guizot many years earlier, before the Bourbons, in their jealousy of all free speculation, had shut up his class-room, and abolished his professorship; which was re-established, after seven years' interval, by the Martignac Ministry. In this earlier production, some topics are discussed at length, which, in the subsequent Lectures, are either not touched upon, or much more summarily disposed of. Among these is the highly interesting subject of the first Essay. The wide difference between M. Guizot and preceding historians is marked in the first words of his first book. A real thinker is shown in nothing more certainly than in the questions which he asks. The fact which stands at the commencement of M. Guizot's subject, — which is the origin and foundation of all subsequent history,

— the fall of the Roman Empire, — he found an unexplained phenomenon ; unless a few generalities about despotism and immorality and luxury can be called explanation. His Essay opens as follows : —

“The fall of the Roman Empire of the West offers a singular phenomenon. Not only the people fail to support the government in its struggle against the Barbarians, but the nation, abandoned to itself, does not attempt, even on its own account, any resistance. More than this, — nothing discloses that a nation exists ; scarcely even is our attention called to what it suffers : it undergoes all the horrors of war, pillage, famine, a total change of its condition and destiny, without giving, either by word or deed, any sign of life.

“This phenomenon is not only singular, but unexampled. Despotism has existed elsewhere than in the Roman Empire : more than once, after countries had been long oppressed by it, foreign invasion and conquest have spread destruction over them. Even when the nation has not resisted, its existence is manifested in history : it suffers, complains, and, in spite of its degradation, maintains some struggle against its misery : narratives and monuments attest what it underwent, what became of it, and, if not its own acts, the acts of others in regard to it.

“In the fifth century, the remnant of the Roman legions disputes with hordes of Barbarians the immense territory of the empire ; but it seems as if that territory was a desert. The imperial troops once driven out or defeated, all seems over : one barbarous tribe wrests the province from another : these excepted, the only existence which shows itself is that of the bishops and clergy. If we had not the laws to testify to us that a Roman population still occupied the soil, history would leave us doubtful of it.

“This total disappearance of the people is more especially observable in the provinces most advanced in civilization, and

longest subject to Rome. The letter called 'The Groans of the Britons,' addressed to Ætius, and imploring with bitter lamentations the aid of a legion, has been looked upon as a monument of the helplessness and meanness of spirit into which the subjects of the empire had fallen. This is unjust. The Britons, less civilized, less Romanized than the other subjects of Rome, did resist the Saxons; and their resistance has a history. At the same epoch, in the same situation, the Italians, the Gauls, the Spaniards, have none. The empire withdrew from those countries; the Barbarians occupied them; and the mass of the inhabitants took not the slightest part, nor marked their place in any manner, in the events which gave them up to so great calamities.

"And yet Gaul, Italy, and Spain were covered with towns which but lately had been rich and populous. Roads, aqueducts, amphitheatres, schools, they possessed in abundance: they were wanting in nothing which gives evidence of wealth, and procures for a people a brilliant and animated existence. The Barbarians came to plunder these riches, disperse these aggregations, destroy these pleasures. Never was the existence of a nation more utterly subverted; never had individuals to endure more evils in the present, more terrors for the future. Whence came it that these nations were mute and lifeless? Why have so many towns sacked, so many fortunes reversed, so many plans of life overthrown, so many proprietors dispossessed, left so few traces, not merely of the active resistance of the people, but even of their sufferings?"

"The causes assigned are the despotism of the imperial government, the degradation of the people, the profound apathy which had seized upon all the governed. And this is true: such was really the main cause of so extraordinary an effect. But it is not enough to enunciate, in these general terms, a cause which has existed elsewhere without producing the same results. We must penetrate deeper into the condition of Roman society, such as despotism had made it. We

must examine by what means despotism had so completely stripped society of all coherence and all life. Despotism has various forms and modes of proceeding, which give very various degrees of energy to its action, and of extensiveness to its consequences."

Such a problem M. Guizot proposes to himself; and is it not remarkable that this question not only was not answered, but was not so much as raised, by the celebrated writers who had treated this period of history before him, — one of those writers being Gibbon? The difference between what we learn from Gibbon on this subject, and what we learn from Guizot, is a measure of the progress of historical inquiry in the intervening period. Even the true sources of history, of all that is most important in it, have never, until the present generation, been really understood, and freely resorted to. It is not in the chronicles, but in the laws, that M. Guizot finds the clew to the immediate agency in the "decline and fall" of the Roman Empire. In the legislation of the period, M. Guizot discovers, under the name of *curiales*, the middle class of the empire, and the recorded evidences of its progressive annihilation.

It is known that the free inhabitants of Roman Europe were almost exclusively a town population: it is, then, in the institutions and condition of the municipalities that the real state of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire must be studied.

In semblance, the constitution of the town communities was of a highly popular character. The *curiales*, or the class liable to serve municipal offices, consisted of all the inhabitants (not specially exempted) who possessed landed property amounting to twenty-five

*jugera*. This class formed a corporation for the management of local affairs. They discharged their functions, partly as a collective body; partly by electing, and filling in rotation, the various municipal magistracies. Notwithstanding the apparent dignity and authority with which this body was invested, the list of exemptions consisted of all the classes who possessed any influence in the State, any real participation in the governing power. It comprised, first, all senatorial families, and all persons whom the emperor had honored with the title of *clarissimi*; then all the clergy, all the military, from the *præfectus prætorii* down to the common legionary, and all the civil functionaries of the State. When we look further, indications still more significant make their appearance. We find that there was an unceasing struggle between the government and the *curiales*, — on their part, to escape from their condition; on the part of the government, to retain them in it. It was found necessary to circumscribe them by every species of artificial restriction. They were interdicted from living out of the town, from serving in the army, or holding any civil employment which conferred exemption from municipal offices, until they had first served all those offices, from the lowest to what was called the highest. Even then, their emancipation was only personal, not extending to their children. If they entered the Church, they must abandon their possessions, either to the *curia* (the municipality), or to some individual who would become a *curialis* in their room. Laws after laws were enacted for detecting, and bringing back to the *curia*, those who had secretly quitted it, and entered surreptitiously into the army, the clergy, or

some public office. They could not absent themselves, even for a time, without the permission of superior authority; and, if they succeeded in escaping, their property was forfeit to the *curia*. No *curialis*, without leave from the governor of the province, could sell the property which constituted him such. If his heirs were not members of the *curia*, or if his widow or daughter married any one not a *curialis*, one-fourth of their property must be relinquished. If he had no children, only one-fourth could be bequeathed by will, the remainder passing to the *curia*. The law looked forward to the case of properties abandoned by the possessor, and made provision that they should devolve upon the *curia*, and that the taxes to which they were liable should be ratably charged upon the property of the other *curiales*.

What was it, in the situation of a *curialis*, which made his condition so irksome, that nothing could keep men in it, unless caged up as in a dungeon? unless every hole or cranny by which they could creep out of it was tightly closed by the provident ingenuity of the legislator?

The explanation is this: Not only were the *curiales* burdened with all the expenses of the local administration, beyond what could be defrayed from the property of the *curia* itself, — property continually encroached upon, and often confiscated, by the general government, — but they had also to collect the revenue of the State; and their own property was responsible for making up its amount. This it was which rendered the condition of a *curialis* an object of dread; which progressively impoverished, and finally extinguished, the class. In

their fate, we see what disease the Roman Empire really died of, and how its destruction had been consummated even before the occupation by the Barbarians. The invasions were no new fact, unheard of until the fifth century: such attempts had been repeatedly made, and never succeeded until the powers of resistance were destroyed by inward decay. The empire perished of misgovernment, in the form of over-taxation. The burden, ever increasing through the necessities occasioned by the impoverishment it had already produced, at last reached this point, that none but those whom a legal exemption had removed out of the class on which the weight principally fell had any thing remaining to lose. The senatorial houses possessed that privilege; and accordingly we still find, at the period of the successful invasions, a certain number of families which had escaped the general wreck of private fortunes, — opulent families, with large landed possessions and numerous slaves. Between these and the mass of the population there existed no tie of affection, no community of interest. With this exception, and that of the Church, all was poverty. The middle class had sunk under its burdens. “Hence,” says M. Guizot, “in the fifth century, so much land lying waste, so many towns almost depopulated, or filled only with a hungry and unoccupied rabble. The system of government which I have described contributed much more to this result than the ravages of the Barbarians.”

In this situation the northern invaders found the Roman Empire. What they made of it is the next subject of M. Guizot’s investigations. The Essays which follow are “On the Origin and Establishment of

the Franks in Gaul ;” “ Causes of the Fall of the Merovingians and Carolingians ;” “ Social State and Political Institutions of France, under the Merovingians and Carolingians ;” “ Political Character of the Feudal *Régime*.” But, on these subjects, our author’s later and more mature thoughts are found in his Lectures ; and we shall therefore pass at once to the more recent work, returning afterwards to the concluding Essay in the earlier volume, which bears this interesting title : “ Causes of the Establishment of a Representative System in England.”

The subject of the Lectures being the history of European civilization, M. Guizot begins with a dissertation on the different meanings of that indefinite term ; and announces that he intends to use it as an equivalent to a state of improvement and progression, in the physical condition and social relations of mankind, on the one hand, and in their inward spiritual development, on the other. We have not space to follow him into this discussion, with which, were we disposed to criticise, we might find some fault ; but which ought, assuredly, to have exempted him from the imputation of looking upon the improvement of mankind as consisting in the progress of social institutions alone. We shall quote a passage near the conclusion of the same Lecture, as a specimen of the moral and philosophical spirit which pervades the work, and because it contains a truth for which we are glad to cite M. Guizot as an authority :—

“ I think, that, in the course of our survey, we shall speedily become convinced that civilization is still very young ; that



the world is very far from having measured the extent of the career which is before it. Assuredly, human conception is far from being, as yet, all that it is capable of becoming: we are far from being able to embrace, in imagination, the whole future of humanity. Nevertheless, let each of us descend into his own thoughts; let him question himself as to the possible good which he comprehends and hopes for, and then confront his idea with what is realized in the world: he will be satisfied that society and civilization are in a very early stage of their progress; that, in spite of all they have accomplished, they have incomparably more still to achieve."

The second Lecture is devoted to a general speculation, which is very characteristic of M. Guizot's mode of thought, and, in our opinion, worthy to be attentively weighed both by the philosophers and the practical politicians of the age.

He observes, that one of the points of difference by which modern civilization is most distinguished from ancient, is the complication, the multiplicity, which characterizes it. In all previous forms of society, Oriental, Greek, or Roman, there is a remarkable character of unity and simplicity. Some one idea seems to have presided over the construction of the social framework, and to have been carried out into all its consequences, without encountering on the way any counterbalancing or limiting principle. Some one element, some one power in society, seems to have early attained predominance, and extinguished all other agencies which could exercise an influence over society capable of conflicting with its own. In Egypt, for example, the theocratic principle absorbed every thing. The temporal government was grounded on the un-

controlled rule of a caste of priests ; and the moral life of the people was built upon the idea, that it belonged to the interpreters of religion to direct the whole detail of human actions. The dominion of an exclusive class, at once the ministers of religion and the sole possessors of letters and secular learning, has impressed its character on all which survives of Egyptian monuments, — on all we know of Egyptian life. Elsewhere, the dominant fact was the supremacy of a military caste, or race of conquerors : the institutions and habits of society were principally modelled by the necessity of maintaining this supremacy. In other places, again, society was mainly the expression of the democratic principle. The sovereignty of the majority, and the equal participation of all male citizens in the administration of the State, were the leading facts by which the aspect of those societies was determined. This singleness in the governing principle had not, indeed, always prevailed in those States. Their early history often presented a conflict of forces. "Among the Egyptians, the Etruscans, even among the Greeks, the caste of warriors, for example, maintained a struggle with that of priests ; elsewhere" (in ancient Gaul, for example), "the spirit of clanship against that of voluntary association, or the aristocratic against the popular principle. But these contests were nearly confined to ante-historical periods : a vague remembrance was all that survived of them. If at a later period the struggle was renewed, it was almost always promptly terminated : one of the rival powers achieved an early victory, and took exclusive possession of society.

“This remarkable simplicity of most of the ancient civilizations, had, in different places, different results. Sometimes, as in Greece, it produced a most rapid development: never did any people unfold itself so brilliantly in so short a time. But, after this wonderful outburst, Greece appeared to have become suddenly exhausted: Her decline, if not so rapid as her elevation, was yet strangely prompt. It seemed as though the creative force of the principle of Greek civilization had spent itself, and no other principle came to its assistance.

“Elsewhere, in Egypt and India for example, the unity of the dominant principle had a different effect: society fell into a stationary state. Simplicity produced monotony: the State did not fall into dissolution; society continued to subsist, but immovable, and, as it were, congealed.”

It was otherwise, says M. Guizot, with modern Europe.

“Her civilization,” he continues, “is confused, diversified, stormy: all forms, all principles, of social organization co-exist; spiritual and temporal authority, theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, democratic elements, every variety of classes and social conditions, are mixed and crowded together; there are innumerable gradations of liberty, wealth, and influence. And these forces are in a state of perpetual conflict; nor has any of them ever been able to stifle the others, and establish its own exclusive authority. Modern Europe offers examples of all systems, of all attempts at social organization: monarchies pure and mixed, theocracies, republics more or less aristocratic, have existed simultaneously one beside another; and, in spite of their diversity, they have all a certain homogeneity, a family likeness, not to be mistaken.

“In ideas and sentiments, the same variety, the same struggle. Theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, popular creeds, check, limit, and modify one another. Even in the most

audacious writings of the middle ages, an idea is never followed to its ultimate consequences. The partisans of absolute power unconsciously shrink from the results of their doctrine: democrats are under similar restraints. One sees that there are ideas and influences encompassing them, which do not suffer them to go all lengths. There is none of that imperturbable hardihood, that blindness of logic, which we find in the ancient world. In the feelings of mankind, the same contrasts, the same multiplicity: a most energetic love of independence, along with a great facility of submission; a rare fidelity of man to man, and at the same time an imperious impulse to follow each his own will, to resist restraint, to live for himself, without taking account of others. A similar character shows itself in modern literatures. In perfection of form and artistic beauty, they are far inferior to the ancient, but richer and more copious in respect of sentiments and ideas. One perceives that human nature has been stirred up to a greater depth, and at a greater number of points. The imperfections of form are an effect of this very cause. The more abundant the materials, the more difficult it is to marshal them into a symmetrical and harmonious shape." \*

Hence, he continues, the modern world, while inferior to many of the ancient forms of human life in the characteristic excellence of each, yet, in all things taken together, is richer and more developed than any of them. From the multitude of elements to be reconciled, each of which during long ages spent the greater part of its strength in combating the rest, the progress of modern civilization has necessarily been slower: but it has lasted, and remained steadily progressive, through fifteen centuries; which no other civilization has ever done.

\* Vol. i., Lecture 2.

There are some to whom this will appear a fanciful theory, a cobweb spun from the brain of a *doctrinaire*. We are of a different opinion. There is doubtless, in the historical statement, some of that pardonable exaggeration, which, in the exposition of large and commanding views, the necessities of language render it so difficult entirely to avoid. The assertion that the civilizations of the ancient world were each under the complete ascendancy of some one exclusive principle is not admissible in the unqualified sense in which M. Guizot enunciates it: the limitations which that assertion would require, on a nearer view, are neither few nor inconsiderable. Still less is it maintainable, that different societies, under different dominant principles, did not at each epoch co-exist in the closest contact: as Athens, Sparta, and Persia or Macedonia; Rome, Carthage, and the East. But, after allowance for overstatement, the substantial truth of the doctrine appears unimpeachable. No one of the ancient forms of society contained in itself that systematic antagonism which we believe to be the only condition under which stability and progressiveness can be permanently reconciled to one another.

There are in society a number of distinct forces, — of separate and independent sources of power. There is the general power of knowledge and cultivated intelligence. There is the power of religion; by which, speaking politically, is to be understood that of religious teachers. There is the power of military skill and discipline. There is the power of wealth; the power of numbers and physical force: and several others might be added. Each of these, by the influence it

exercises over society, is fruitful of certain kinds of beneficial results: none of them is favorable to all kinds. There is no one of these powers, which, if it could make itself absolute, and deprive the others of all influence except in aid of and in subordination to its own, would not show itself the enemy of some of the essential constituents of human well-being. Certain good results would be doubtless obtained, at least for a time: some of the interests of society would be adequately cared for; because, with certain of them, the natural tendency of each of these powers spontaneously coincides. But there would be other interests, in greater number, which the complete ascendancy of any one of these social elements would leave unprovided for, and which must depend for their protection on the influence which can be exercised by other elements.

We believe, with M. Guizot, that modern Europe presents the only example in history, of the maintenance, through many ages, of this co-ordinate action among rival powers naturally tending in different directions. And, with him, we ascribe chiefly to this cause the spirit of improvement, which has never ceased to exist, and still makes progress, in the European nations. At no time has Europe been free from a contest of rival powers for dominion over society. If the clergy had succeeded, as in Egypt, in making the kings subservient to them; if, as among the Mussulmans of old, or the Russians now, the supreme religious authority had merged in the attributes of the temporal ruler; if the military and feudal nobility had reduced the clergy to be their tools, and retained the

burgesses as their serfs; if a commercial aristocracy, as at Tyre, Carthage, and Venice, had got rid of kings, and governed by a military force composed of foreign mercenaries, — Europe would have arrived much more rapidly at such kinds and degrees of national greatness and well-being as those influences severally tended to promote, but from that time would either have stagnated, like the great stationary despotisms of the East, or have perished for lack of such other elements of civilization as could sufficiently unfold themselves only under some other patronage. — Nor is this a danger existing only in the past, but one which may be yet impending over the future. If the perpetual antagonism which has kept the human mind alive were to give place to the complete preponderance of any, even the most salutary, element, we might yet find that we have counted too confidently upon the progressiveness which we are so often told is an inherent property of our species. Education, for example, — mental culture, — would seem to have a better title than could be derived from any thing else to rule the world with exclusive authority; yet if the lettered and cultivated class, embodied and disciplined under a central organ, could become in Europe what it is in China, — the government unchecked by any power residing in the mass of citizens, and permitted to assume a parental tutelage over all the operations of life, — the result would probably be a darker despotism, one more opposed to improvement, than even the military monarchies and aristocracies have in fact proved. And, in like manner, if what seems to be the tendency of things in the United States should proceed for some

generations unrestrained; if the power of numbers — of the opinions and instincts of the mass — should acquire and retain the absolute government of society, and impose silence upon all voices which dissent from its decisions or dispute its authority, — we should expect, that, in such countries, the condition of human nature would become as stationary as in China, and perhaps at a still lower point of elevation in the scale.

However these things may be, and imperfectly as many of the elements have yet unfolded themselves which are hereafter to compose the civilization of the modern world, there is no doubt that it has always possessed, in comparison with the older forms of life and society, that complex and manifold character which M. Guizot ascribes to it.

He proceeds to inquire whether any explanation of this peculiarity of the European nations can be traced in their origin; and he finds, in fact, that origin to be extremely multifarious. The European world shaped itself from a chaos, in which Roman, Christian, and Barbarian ingredients were commingled. M. Guizot attempts to determine what portion of the elements of modern life derived their beginning from each of these sources.

From the Roman Empire he finds that Europe derived both the fact and the idea of municipal institutions, — a thing unknown to the Germanic conquerors. The Roman Empire was originally an aggregation of towns: the life of the people, especially in the Western Empire, was a town life; their institutions and social arrangements, except the system of functionaries destined to maintain the authority of the sovereign, were



all grounded upon the towns. When the central power retired from the Western Empire, town life and town institutions, though in an enfeebled condition, were what remained. In Italy, where they were less enfeebled than elsewhere, civilization revived not only earlier than in the rest of Europe, but in forms more similar to those of the ancient world. The south of France had, next to Italy, partaken most in the fruits of Roman civilization: its towns had been the richest and most flourishing on this side the Alps; and having, therefore, held out longer than those farther north against the fiscal tyranny of the empire, were not so completely ruined when the conquest took place. Accordingly, their municipal institutions were transmitted unbroken from the Roman period to recent times. This, then, was one legacy which the empire left to the nations which were shaped out of its ruins. But it left also, though not a central authority, the habit of requiring and looking for such an authority. It left "the idea of the empire, the name of the emperor, the conception of the imperial majesty, of a sacred power inherent in the imperial name." This idea, at no time becoming extinct, resumed, as society became more settled, a portion of its pristine power: towards the close of the middle ages, we find it once more a really influential element. Finally, Rome left a body of written law, constructed by and for a wealthy and cultivated society: this served as a pattern of civilization to the rude invaders, and assumed an ever-increasing importance as they became more civilized.

In the field of intellect and purely mental development, Rome, and, through Rome, her predecessor,

Greece, left a still richer inheritance, but one which did not come much into play until a later period.

“Liberty of thought — Reason taking herself for her own starting-point and her own guide — is an idea essentially sprung from antiquity; an idea which modern society owes to Greece and Rome. We evidently did not receive it either from Christianity or from Germany; for in neither of these elements of our civilization was it included. It was powerful, on the contrary, it predominated, in the Græco-Roman civilization. That was its true origin. It is the most precious legacy which antiquity left to the modern world, — a legacy which was never quite suspended and valueless; for we see the fundamental principle of all philosophy, the right of human reason to explore for itself, animating the writings and the life of Scotus Erigena, and the doctrine of freedom of thought still erect in the ninth century, in the face of the principle of authority.”\*

Such, then, are the benefits which Europe has derived from the relics of the ancient imperial civilization. But, along with this perishing society, the Barbarians found another and a rising society, in all the freshness and vigor of youth, — the Christian Church. In the debt which modern society owes to this great institution, is first to be included, in M. Guizot's opinion, all which it owes to Christianity.

“At that time, none of the means were in existence by which, in our own days, moral influences establish and maintain themselves independently of institutions; none of the instruments whereby a pure truth, a mere idea, acquires an empire over minds, governs actions, determines events. In the fourth century, nothing existed which could give to ideas,

\* Vol. iv. p. 191.

to mere personal sentiments, such an authority. To make head against the disasters, to come victoriously out of the tempests, of such a period, there was needed a strongly organized and energetically governed society. It is not too much to affirm, that, at the period in question, the Christian Church saved Christianity. It was the Church, with its institutions, its magistrates, its authority, which maintained itself against the decay of the empire from within, and against barbarism from without; which won over the Barbarians, and became the civilizing principle, the principle of fusion between the Roman and the Barbaric world."

That, without its compact organization, the Christian hierarchy could have so rapidly taken possession of the uncultivated minds of the Barbarians; that, before the conquest was completed, the conquerors would have universally adopted the religion of the vanquished, if that religion had been recommended to them by nothing but its intrinsic superiority, — we agree with M. Guizot in thinking incredible. We do not find that other savages, at other eras, have yielded with similar readiness to the same influences; nor did the minds or lives of the invaders, for some centuries after their conversion, give evidence that the real merits of Christianity had made any deep impression upon them. The true explanation is to be found in the power of intellectual superiority. As the condition of secular society became more discouraging, the Church had more and more engrossed to itself whatever of real talents, as well as of sincere philanthropy, existed in the Roman world. "Among the Christians of that epoch," says M. Guizot, "there were men who had thought of every thing; to whom all moral and political questions were familiar:

men who had on all subjects well-defined opinions, energetic feelings, and an ardent desire to propagate them and make them predominant. Never did any body of men make such efforts to act upon the world, and assimilate it to themselves, as did the Christian Church from the fifth to the tenth century. She attacked Barbarism at almost all points, striving to civilize it by her ascendancy."

In this the Church was aided by the important temporal position, which, in the general decay of other elements of society, it had assumed in the Roman Empire. Alone strong in the midst of weakness, alone possessing natural sources of power within itself, it was the prop to which all things clung which felt themselves in need of support. The clergy, and especially the prelate, had become the most influential members of temporal society. All that remained of the former wealth of the empire had for some time tended more and more in the direction of the Church. At the time of the invasions, we find the bishops very generally invested, under the title of *defensor civitatis*, with a high public character, — as the patrons, and towards all strangers the representatives, of the town communities. It was they who treated with the invaders in the name of the natives; it was their adhesion which guaranteed the general obedience; and, after the conversion of the conquerors, it was to their sacred character that the conquered were indebted for whatever mitigation they experienced of the fury of conquest.

Thus salutary, and even indispensable, was the influence of the Christian clergy during the confused period of the invasions. M. Guizot has not overlooked, but

impartially analyzed, the mixed character of good and evil which belonged even in that age, and still more in the succeeding ages, to the power of the Church. One beneficial consequence which he ascribes to it is worthy of especial notice, — the separation (unknown to antiquity) between temporal and spiritual authority. He, in common with the best thinkers of our time, attributes to this fact the happiest influence on European civilization. It was the parent, he says, of liberty of conscience. “The separation of temporal and spiritual is founded on the idea, that material force has no right, no hold, over the mind, over conviction, over truth.” Enormous as have been the sins of the Catholic Church in the way of religious intolerance, her assertion of this principle has done more for human freedom than all the fires she ever kindled have done to destroy it. Toleration cannot exist, or exists only as a consequence of contempt, where, Church and State being virtually the same body, disaffection to the national worship is treason to the State; as is sufficiently evidenced by Grecian and Roman history, notwithstanding the fallacious appearance of liberality inherent in Polytheism, which did not prevent, as long as the national religion continued in vigor, almost every really free thinker of any ability, in the freest city of Greece, from being either banished or put to death for blasphemy.\* In more recent times, where the chief of the State has been also the supreme pontiff, not, as in England, only nominally, but substantially (as in the case of China, Russia, the Caliphs, and the Sultans of Constantinople), the result has been a perfection of despotism, and a

\* Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, &c.

voluntary abasement under its yoke, which have no parallel elsewhere except among the most besotted Barbarians.

It remains to assign, in the elemental chaos from which the modern nations arose, the Germanic or Barbaric element. What has Europe derived from the Barbarian invaders? M. Guizot answers, The spirit of liberty. That spirit, as it exists in the modern world, is something which had never before been found in company with civilization. The liberty of the ancient commonwealths did not mean individual freedom of action: it meant a certain form of political organization; and, instead of asserting the private freedom of each citizen, it was compatible with a more complete subjection of every individual to the State, and a more active interference of the ruling powers with private conduct, than is the practice of what are now deemed the most despotic governments. The modern spirit of liberty, on the contrary, is the love of individual independence; the claim for freedom of action, with as little interference as is compatible with the necessities of society from any authority other than the conscience of the individual. It is, in fact, the self-will of the savage, moderated and limited by the demands of civilized life; and M. Guizot is not mistaken in believing that it came to us, not from ancient civilization, but from the savage element infused into that enervated civilization by its barbarous conquerors. He adds, that, together with this spirit of liberty, the invaders brought also the spirit of voluntary association; the institution of military patronage, the bond between followers and a leader of their own choice, which afterwards ripened into

feudality. This voluntary dependence of man upon man, this relation of protection and service, this spontaneous loyalty to a superior not deriving his authority from law or from the constitution of society, but from the voluntary election of the dependant himself, was unknown to the civilized nations of antiquity; though frequent among savages, and so customary in the Germanic race, as to have been deemed, though erroneously, characteristic of it.

To reconcile, in any moderate degree, these jarring elements; to produce even an endurable state of society, not to say a prosperous and improving one, by the amalgamation of savages and slaves, — was a work of many centuries. M. Guizot's Lectures are chiefly occupied in tracing the progress of this work, and showing by what agencies it was accomplished. The history of the European nations consists of three periods, — the period of confusion, the feudal period, and the modern period. The Lectures of 1828 include, though on a very compressed scale, all the three, but only in relation to the history of society, omitting that of thought, and of the human mind. In the following year, the professor took a wider range. The three volumes which contain the Lectures of 1829 are a complete historical analysis of the period of confusion; expounding, with sufficient fulness of detail, both the state of political society in each successive stage of that prolonged anarchy, and the state of intellect, as evidenced by literature and speculation. In these volumes, M. Guizot is the philosopher of the period of which M. Augustin Thierry is the painter. In the Lectures of 1830, — which, having been prematurely broken off by the

political events of that year, occupy (with the *Pièces Justificatives*) only two volumes, — he commenced a similar analysis of the feudal period, but did not quite complete the political and social part of the subject: the examination of the intellectual products of the period was not even commenced. In this state, this great unfinished monument still remains. Imperfect, however, as it is, it contains much more than we can attempt to bring under even the most cursory review within our narrow limits. We can only pause and dwell upon the important epochs, and upon speculations which involve some great and fertile idea, or throw a strong light upon some interesting portion of the history. Among these last we must include the passage\* in which M. Guizot describes the manner in which the civilization of the conquered impressed the imagination of the victors.

“We have just passed in review the closing age of the Roman civilization; and we found it in full *décadence*, without force, without fecundity, incapable almost of keeping itself alive. We now behold it vanquished and ruined by the Barbarians; when, on a sudden, it re-appears fruitful and powerful: it assumes, over the institutions and manners which are brought newly into contact with it, a prodigious empire; it impresses on them, more and more, its own character; it governs and metamorphoses its conquerors.

“Among many causes, there were two which principally contributed to this result, — the power of a systematic and comprehensive body of civil law, and the natural ascendancy of civilization over barbarism.

“In fixing themselves to a single abode, and becoming landed proprietors, the Barbarians contracted, both with the

\* Vol. ii. pp. 386-8.



Roman population and with each other, relations more various and durable than any they had previously known; their civil existence assumed greater breadth and stability. The Roman law was alone fit to regulate this new existence: it alone could deal adequately with such a multitude of relations. The Barbarians, however they might strive to preserve their own customs, were caught, as it were, in the meshes of this scientific legislation, and were obliged to bring the new social order, in a great measure, into subjection to it; not politically indeed, but civilly.

“Further, the spectacle itself of Roman civilization exercised a great empire over their minds. What strikes our modern fancy, what we greedily seek for in history, in poems, travels, romances, is the picture of a state of society unlike the regularity of our own; savage life, with its independence, its novelty, and its adventure. Quite different were the impressions of the Barbarians. What to them was striking, what appeared to them great and wonderful, was civilization: the monuments of Roman industry, the cities, roads, aqueducts, amphitheatres; that society so orderly, so provident, so full of variety in its fixity,—this was the object of their admiration and their astonishment. Though conquerors, they were sensible of inferiority to the conquered. The Barbarian might despise the Roman as an individual being; but the Roman world, in its *ensemble*, appeared to him something above his level; and all the great men of the age of the conquests, Alaric, Ataulph, Theodoric, and so many others, while destroying and trampling upon Roman society, used all their efforts to copy it.”

But their attempt was fruitless. It was not by merely seating themselves in the throne of the emperors that the chiefs of the Barbarians could re-infuse life into a social order, to which, when already perishing by its own infirmities, they had dealt the final blow.

Nor was it in that old form that peaceful and regular government could be restored to Europe. The confusion was too chaotic to admit of so easy a disentanglement. Before fixed institutions could become possible, it was necessary to have a fixed population; and this primary condition was long unattained. Bands of Barbarians, of various races, with no bond of national union, overran the empire without mutual concert, and occupied the country as much as a people so migratory and vagabond could be said to occupy it: but even the loose ties which held together each tribe or band became relaxed by the consequences of spreading themselves over an extensive territory; fresh hordes, too, were ever pressing on behind; and the very first requisite of order, permanent territorial limits, could not establish itself, either between properties or sovereignties, for nearly three centuries. The annals of the conquered countries, during the intermediate period, but chronicle the desultory warfare of the invaders with one another; the effect of which, to the conquered, was a perpetual renewal of suffering, and increase of impoverishment.

M. Guizot dates the termination of this downward period from the reign of Charlemagne: others (for example, M. de Sismondi) have placed it later. We are inclined to agree with M. Guizot, no part of whose work seems to us more admirable than that in which he fixes the place in history of that remarkable man.\*

The name of Charlemagne, says M. Guizot, has come down to us as one of the greatest in history. Though not the founder of his dynasty, he has given his name both to his race and to the age.

\* Vol. iii., Lecture 20.

“The homage paid to him is often blind and undistinguishing ; his genius and glory are extolled without discrimination or measure : yet, at the same time, persons repeat, one after another, that he founded nothing, accomplished nothing ; that his empire, his laws, all his works, perished with him. And this historical commonplace introduces a crowd of moral commonplaces on the ineffectualness and uselessness of great men, the vanity of their projects, the little trace which they leave in the world after having troubled it in all directions. . . . Is this true ? Is it the destiny of great men to be merely a burden and a useless wonder to mankind ?

“At the first glance, the commonplace might be supposed to be a truth. The victories, conquests, institutions, reforms, projects, all the greatness and glory, of Charlemagne, vanished with him : he seemed a meteor suddenly emerging from the darkness of barbarism, to be as suddenly lost and extinguished in the shadow of feudality. There are other such examples in history. . . .

“But we must beware of trusting these appearances. To understand the meaning of great events, and measure the agency and influence of great men, we need to look far deeper into the matter.

“The activity of a great man is of two kinds ; he performs two parts ; two epochs may generally be distinguished in his career. First, he understands better than other people the wants of his time ; its real, present exigencies ; what, in the age he lives in, society needs, to enable it to subsist, and attain its natural development. He understands these wants better than any other person of the time, and knows better than any other how to wield the powers of society, and direct them skilfully towards the realization of this end. Hence proceed his power and glory : it is in virtue of this, that, as soon as he appears, he is understood, accepted, followed ; that all give their willing aid to the work which he is performing for the benefit of all.

“But he does not stop here. When the real wants of his time are in some degree satisfied, the ideas and the will of the great man proceed further. He quits the region of present facts and exigencies; he gives himself up to views in some measure personal to himself; he indulges in combinations more or less vast and specious, but which are not, like his previous labors, founded on the actual state, the common instincts, the determinate wishes, of society, but are remote and arbitrary. He aspires to extend his activity and influence indefinitely, and to possess the future as he has possessed the present.

“Here egoism and illusion commence. For some time, on the faith of what he has already done, the great man is followed in this new career; he is believed in, and obeyed; men lend themselves to his fancies; his flatterers and his dupes even admire and vaunt them as his sublimest conceptions. The public, however, in whom a mere delusion is never of any long continuance, soon discovers that it is impelled in a direction in which it has no desire to move. At first, the great man had enlisted his high intelligence and powerful will in the service of the general feeling and wish: he now seeks to employ the public force in the service of his individual ideas and desires; he is attempting things which he alone wishes or understands. Hence, disquietude first, and then uneasiness: for a time he is still followed, but sluggishly and reluctantly; next, he is censured and complained of; finally, he is abandoned, and falls; and all which he alone had planned and desired, all the merely personal and arbitrary part of his works, perishes with him.”

After briefly illustrating his remarks by the example of Napoléon, — so often, by his flatterers, represented as another Charlemagne, a comparison which is the height of injustice to the earlier conqueror, — M. Guizot observes, that the wars of Charlemagne were of a totally

different character from those of the previous dynasty. "They were not dissensions between tribe and tribe, or chief and chief, nor expeditions engaged in for the purpose of settlement or of pillage: they were systematic wars, inspired by a political purpose, and commanded by a public necessity." Their purpose was no other than that of putting an end to the invasions. He repelled the Saracens: the Saxons and Sclavonians, against whom merely defensive arrangements were not sufficient, he attacked and subjugated in their native forests.

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"At the death of Charlemagne, the conquests cease, the unity disappears, the empire is dismembered, and falls to pieces; but is it true that nothing remained? that the warlike exploits of Charlemagne were absolutely sterile? that he achieved nothing, founded nothing?"

"There is but one way to resolve this question: it is to ask ourselves, if, after Charlemagne, the countries which he had governed found themselves in the same situation as before; if the twofold invasions which, on the north and on the south, menaced their territory, their religion, and their race, recommenced after being thus suspended; if the Saxons, Sclavonians, Avars, Arabs, still kept the possessors of the Roman Empire in perpetual disturbance and anxiety. Evidently it was not so. True, the empire of Charlemagne was broken up, but into separate States, which arose as so many barriers at all points where there was still danger. To the time of Charlemagne, the frontiers of Germany, Spain, and Italy, were in continual fluctuation; no constituted public force had attained a permanent shape: he was compelled to be constantly transporting himself from one end to the other of his dominions, in order to oppose to the invaders the movable and temporary force of his armies. After him, the scene is

changed: real political barriers, States more or less organized, but real and durable, arose; the kingdoms of Lorraine, of Germany, Italy, the two Burgundies, Navarre, date from that time; and, in spite of the vicissitudes of their destiny, they subsist, and suffice to oppose effectual resistance to the invading movement. Accordingly, that movement ceases, or continues only in the form of maritime expeditions, most desolating at the points which they reach, but which cannot be made with great masses of men, nor produce great results.

“Although, therefore, the vast dominion of Charlemagne perished with him, it is not true that he founded nothing: he founded all the States which sprung from the dismemberment of his empire. His conquests entered into new combinations; but his wars attained their end. The foundation of the work subsisted, though its form was changed.”

In the character of an administrator and a legislator, the career of Charlemagne is still more remarkable than as a conqueror. His long reign was one struggle against the universal insecurity and disorder. He was one of the sort of men described by M. Guizot, “whom the spectacle of anarchy or of social immobility strikes and revolts; whom it shocks intellectually, as a fact which ought not to exist; and who are possessed with the desire to correct it, — to introduce some rule, some principle of regularity and permanence, into the world which is before them.” Gifted with an unresting activity, unequalled perhaps by any other sovereign, Charlemagne passed his life in attempting to convert a chaos into an orderly and regular government; to create a general system of administration, under an efficient central authority. In this attempt he was very imperfectly successful. The government of an extensive

country from a central point was too complicated, too difficult : it required the co-operation of too many agents, and of intelligences too much developed, to be capable of being carried on by Barbarians. "The disorder around him was immense, invincible : he repressed it for a moment on a single point ; but the evil reigned wherever his terrible will had not penetrated ; and, even where he had passed, it recommenced as soon as he had departed."

Nevertheless, his efforts were not lost, — not wholly unfruitful. His instrument of government was composed of two sets of functionaries, local and central. The local portion consisted of the resident governors, the dukes, counts, &c., together with the vassals or *beneficiarii*, afterwards called "feudatories ;" to whom, when lands had been granted, a more or less indefinite share had been delegated of the authority and jurisdiction of the sovereign. The central machinery consisted of *missi dominici*, — temporary agents sent into the provinces, and from one province to another, as the sovereign's own representatives, to inspect, control, report, and even reform what was amiss, either in act or negligence, on the part of the local functionaries. Over all these, the prince held, with a firm hand, the reins of government ; aided by a national assembly or convocation of chiefs, when he chose to summon it, either because he desired their counsel or needed their moral support.

"Is it possible, that of this government, so active and vigorous, nothing remained? that all disappeared with Charlemagne? that he founded nothing for the internal consolidation of society?"

“What fell with Charlemagne, what rested upon him alone, and could not survive him, was the central government. After continuing some time under Louis le Debonnaire and Charles le Chauve, but with less and less energy and influence, the general assemblies, the *missi dominici*, the whole machinery of the central and sovereign administration, disappeared. Not so the local government, the dukes, counts, *vicaires*, *centeniers*, *beneficiarii*,—vassals who held authority in their several neighborhoods under the rule of Charlemagne. Before his time, the disorder had been as great in each locality as in the commonwealth generally; landed properties, magistracies, were incessantly changing hands; no local positions or influences possessed any steadiness or permanence. During the forty-six years of his government, these influences had time to become rooted in the same soil, in the same families: they had acquired stability, the first condition of the progress which was destined to render them independent and hereditary, and make them the elements of the feudal régime. Nothing, certainly, less resembles feudalism than the sovereign unity which Charlemagne aspired to establish; yet he is the true founder of feudal society: it was he, who, by arresting the external invasions, and repressing to a certain extent the intestine disorders, gave to situations, to fortunes, to local influences, sufficient time to take real possession of the country. After him, his general government perished like his conquests, his unity of authority like his extended empire; but as the empire was broken into separate States, which acquired a vigorous and durable life, so the central sovereignty of Charlemagne resolved itself into a multitude of local sovereignties, to which a portion of the strength of his government had been imparted, and which had acquired under its shelter the conditions requisite for reality and durability. So that, in this second point of view, in his civil as well as military capacity, if we look beyond first appearances, he accomplished and founded much.”



Thus does a more accurate knowledge correct the two contrary errors, one or other of which is next to universal among superficial thinkers, respecting the influence of great men upon society. A great ruler cannot shape the world after his own pattern: he is condemned to work in the direction of existing and spontaneous tendencies, and has only the discretion of singling out the most beneficial of these. Yet the difference is great between a skilful pilot and none at all, though a pilot cannot steer in opposition to wind and tide. Improvements of the very first order, and for which society is completely prepared, which lie in the natural course and tendency of human events, and are the next stage through which mankind will pass, may be retarded indefinitely for want of a great man to throw the weight of his individual will and faculties into the trembling scale. Without Charlemagne, who can say for how many centuries longer the period of confusion might have been protracted? Yet, in this same example, it equally appears what a great ruler can *not* do. Like Ataulph, Theodoric, Clovis, all the ablest chiefs of the invaders, Charlemagne dreamed of restoring the Roman Empire.

“This was, in him, the portion of egoism and illusion; and in this it was that he failed. The Roman *imperium*, and its unity, were invincibly repugnant to the new distribution of the population, the new relations, the new moral condition, of mankind. Roman civilization could only enter as a transformed element into the new world which was preparing. This idea, this aspiration, of Charlemagne, was not a public idea, nor a public want: all that he did for its accomplishment perished with him.

“Yet even of this vain endeavor something remained. The name of the Western Empire, revived by him, and the rights which were thought to be attached to the title of Emperor, resumed their place among the elements of history, and were, for several centuries longer, an object of ambition, an influencing principle of events. Even, therefore, in the purely egotistical and ephemeral portion of his operations, it cannot be said that the ideas of Charlemagne were absolutely sterile, nor totally devoid of duration.”

M. Guizot, we think, is scarcely just to Charlemagne in this implied censure upon his attempt to reconstruct civilized society on the only model familiar to him. The most intelligent cotemporaries shared his error, and saw in the dismemberment of his empire, and the fall of his despotic authority, a return to chaos. Though it is easy for us to see, it was difficult for them to foresee, that European society, such as the invasions had made it, admitted of no return to order but through something resembling the feudal system. By the writers who have come down to us from the age in which that system arose, it was looked upon as nothing less than universal anarchy and dissolution. “Consult the poets of the time, consult the chroniclers: they all thought that the world was coming to an end.” M. Guizot quotes one of the monuments of the time, — a poem by Florus, a deacon of the church at Lyons, — which displays with equal *naïveté* the chagrin of the instructed few at the breaking-up of the great unsolid structure which Charlemagne had raised, and the satisfaction which the same fact caused to the people at large; not the only instance in history in which the instinct of the people has been nearer the truth than

the considerate judgment of those who clung to historical precedent. That renewal of the onward movement, which even a Charlemagne could not effect by means repugnant to the natural tendencies of the times, took place through the operation of ordinary causes, as soon as society had assumed the form which alone could give rise to fixed expectations and positions, and produce a sort of security.

“The moral and the social state of the people at this epoch equally resisted all association, all government of a single and extended character. Mankind had few ideas, and did not look far around. Social relations were rare and restricted. The horizon of thought and of life was exceedingly limited. Under such conditions, a great society is impossible. What are the natural and necessary bonds of political union? On the one hand, the number and extent of the social relations; on the other, of the ideas whereby men communicate and are held together. Where neither of these are numerous or extensive, the bonds of a great society or state are non-existent. Such were the times of which we now speak. Small societies, local governments, cut, as it were, to the measure of existing ideas and relations, were alone possible; and these alone succeeded in establishing themselves. The elements of these little societies and little governments were ready-made. The possessors of benefices by grant from the king, or of domains occupied by conquest, the counts, dukes, governors of provinces, were disseminated throughout the country. These became the natural centres of associations co-extensive with them. Round these was agglomerated, voluntarily or by force, the neighboring population, whether free or in bondage. Thus were formed the petty States called “fiefs;” and this was the real cause of the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne.”\*

\* Vol. iii. *ad fin.*

We have now, therefore, arrived at the opening of the feudal period, and have to attempt to appreciate what the feudal society was, and what was the influence of that society and of its institutions on the fortunes of the human race; what new elements it introduced, what new tendencies it impressed upon human nature, or to which of the existing tendencies it imparted additional strength.

M. Guizot's estimate of feudalism is among the most interesting, and, on the whole, the most satisfactory, of his speculations. He observes,\* that sufficient importance is seldom attached to the effects produced upon the mental nature of mankind by mere changes in their outward mode of living.

“Every one is aware of the notice which has been taken of the influence of climate, and the importance attached to it by Montesquieu. If we confine ourselves to the direct influence of diversity of climate upon mankind, it is perhaps less than has been supposed: the appreciation of it is, at all events, difficult and vague. But the indirect effects,—those, for instance, which result from the fact, that in a warm climate the people live in the open air, while in cold countries they shut themselves up in their houses; that they subsist upon different kinds of food, and the like—are highly important, and, merely by their influence on the details of material existence, act powerfully on civilization. Every great revolution produces in the state of society some changes of this sort; and these ought to be carefully observed.

“The introduction of the feudal *régime* occasioned one such change, of which the importance cannot be overlooked: it altered the distribution of the population over the face of the country. Till that time, the masters of the soil, the sove-

\* Vol. i., Lecture 4.

reign class, lived collected in masses more or less numerous ; either sedentary in the towns, or wandering in bands over the country. In the feudal state, these same persons lived insulated, each in his own habitation, at great distances from one another. It is obvious how great an influence this change must have exercised over the character and progress of civilization. Social preponderance and political power passed from the towns to the country ; private property and private life assumed pre-eminence over public. This first effect of the triumph of the feudal principle appears more fruitful in consequences, the longer we consider it.

“ Let us examine feudal society as it is in its own nature ; looking at it, first of all, in its simple and fundamental element. Let us figure to ourselves a single possessor of a fief in his own domain, and consider what will be the character of the little association which groups itself around him.

“ He establishes himself in a retired and defensible place, which he takes care to render safe and strong : he there erects what he terms his castle. With whom does he establish himself there ? With his wife and his children : probably, also, some few freemen, who have not become landed proprietors, have attached themselves to his person, and remain domesticated with him. These are all the inmates of the castle itself. Around it, and under its protection, collects a small population of laborers, — of serfs, who cultivate the domain of the seigneur. Amidst this inferior population religion comes, builds a church, and establishes a priest. In the early times of feudality, this priest is at once the chaplain of the castle and the parish clergyman of the village : at a later period, the two characters are separated. This, then, is the organic molecule, the unit, if we may so speak, of feudal society. This we have to summon before us, and demand an answer to the two questions which should be addressed to every fact in history : What was it calculated to do towards the development, first of man, and next of society ? ”

The first of its peculiarities, he continues, is the prodigious importance which the head of this little association must assume in his own eyes, and those of all around him. To the liberty of the man and the warrior, the sentiment of personality and individual independence, which predominated in savage life, is now added the importance of the master, the landed proprietor, the head of a family. No feeling of self-importance comparable to this is habitually generated in any other known form of civilization. A Roman patrician, for example, "was the head of a family, was a master, a superior: he was, besides, a religious magistrate, a pontiff in the interior of his family." But the importance of a religious magistrate is not personal: it is borrowed from the divinity whom he serves. In civil life, the patrician "was a member of the senate, — of a corporation which lived united in one place. This, again, was an importance derived from without; borrowed and reflected from that of his corporation."

"The grandeur of the ancient aristocracies was associated with religious and political functions: it belonged to the situation, to the corporation at large, more than to the individual. That of the possessor of a fief is, on the contrary, purely personal. He receives nothing from any one: his rights, his powers, come from himself alone. He is not a religious magistrate, nor a member of a senate: all his importance centres in his own person: whatever he is, he is by his own right and in his own name. Above him, no superior of whom he is the representative and the interpreter; around him, no equals; no rigorous universal law to curb him; no external force habitually controlling his will, — he knows no restraint but the limits of his strength, or the presence of an immedi-

ate danger. With what intensity must not such a situation act upon the mind of the man who occupies it! What boundless pride, what haughtiness,—to speak plainly, what insolence,—must arise in his soul!”

We pass to the influence of this new state of society upon the development of domestic feelings and family life.

“History exhibits to us the family in several different shapes. First, the patriarchal family, as seen in the Bible, and in the various monuments of the East. The family is here numerous, and amounts to a tribe. The chief, or patriarch, lives in a state of community with his children, his kindred (of whom all the various generations are grouped around him), and his domestics. Not only does he live with them, but his interests and occupations are the same with theirs: he leads the same life. This is the situation of Abraham, of the patriarchs, of the chiefs of Arab tribes, who are in our own days a faithful image of patriarchal society.

“Another form of the family is the clan,—that little association, the type of which must be sought in Scotland and Ireland; and through which, probably, a great part of the European world has at some time passed. This is no longer the patriarchal family. Between the chief and the rest of the people there is now a great difference of condition. He does not lead the same life with his followers: they mostly cultivate and serve; he takes his ease, and has no occupation save that of a warrior. But he and they have a common origin; they bear the same name; their relationship, their ancient traditions, and their community of affections and recollections, establish among all the members of the clan a moral union, a kind of equality.

“Does the feudal family resemble either of these types? Evidently not. At first sight, it has some apparent resemblance to the clan; but the difference is immense. The

population which surrounds the possessor of the fief are perfect strangers to him: they do not bear his name; they have no relationship to him; are connected with him by no tie, historical or moral. Neither does he, as in the patriarchal family, lead the same life and carry on the same labor as those about him: he has no occupation but war; they are tillers of the ground. The feudal family is not numerous; it does not constitute a tribe; it is confined to the family in the most restricted sense, the wife and children; it lives apart from the rest of the people, in the interior of the castle. Five or six persons, in a position at once alien from and superior to all others, constitute the feudal family. . . . Internal life, domestic society, are certain here to acquire a great preponderance. I grant that the rudeness and violent passions of the chief, and his habit of passing his time in war and in the chase, must obstruct and retard the formation of domestic habits; but that obstacle will be overcome. The chief must return habitually to his own home. There he always finds his wife, his children, and them alone, or almost alone: they, and no others, compose his permanent society; they alone always partake his interest, his destiny. It is impossible that domestic life should not acquire a great ascendancy. The proofs are abundant. Was it not in the feudal family that the importance of women took its rise? In all the societies of antiquity, not only where no family spirit existed, but where that spirit was powerful, for instance in the patriarchal societies, women did not occupy any thing like the place which they acquired in Europe under the feudal polity. The cause of this has been looked for in the peculiar manners of the ancient Germans; in a characteristic respect which it is affirmed, that, in the midst of their forests, they paid to women. German patriotism has built upon one sentence of Tacitus a fancied superiority, a primitive and ineffaceable purity of German manners in the relations of the sexes to each other. Mere chimeras! Expressions similar to those



of Tacitus, sentiments and usages analogous to those of the ancient Germans, are found in the recitals of many observers of barbarous tribes. There is nothing peculiar in the matter, nothing characteristic of any particular race. The importance of women in Europe arose from the progress and preponderance of domestic manners; and that preponderance became, at an early period, an essential character of feudal life."

In corroboration of these remarks, he observes in another place, that, in the feudal form of society (unlike all those which preceded it), the representative of the chief's person and the delegate of his authority, during his frequent absences, was the *châtelaine*. In his warlike expeditions and hunting excursions, his crusadings and his captivities, she directed his affairs, and governed his people with a power equal to his own. No importance comparable to this, no position equally calculated to call forth the human faculties, had fallen to the lot of women before, nor, it may be added, since. And the fruits are seen in the many examples of heroic women which the feudal annals present to us, — women who fully equalled, in every masculine virtue, the bravest of the men with whom they were associated; often greatly surpassed them in prudence, and fell short of them only in ferocity.

M. Guizot now turns from the seigneurial abode to the dependent population surrounding it. Here all things present a far worse aspect.

"In any social situation which lasts a certain length of time, there inevitably arises between those whom it brings into contact, under whatever conditions, a certain moral tie, — certain feelings of protection, of benevolence, of affection. It was thus in the feudal society: one cannot doubt, that, in

process of time, there were formed between the cultivators and their seigneur some moral relations, some habits of sympathy. But this happened in spite of their relative position, and nowise from its influence. Considered in itself, the situation was radically vicious. There was nothing morally in common between the feudal superior and the cultivators: they were part of his domain; they were his property. . . . Between the seigneur and those who tilled the ground which belonged to him, there were (as far as this can ever be said when human beings are brought together) no laws, no protection, no society. Hence, I conceive, that truly prodigious and invincible detestation which the rural population has entertained in all ages for the feudal *régime*. . . . Theocratic and monarchical despotism have more than once obtained the acquiescence, and almost the affection, of the population subject to them. The reason is, theocracy and monarchy exercise their dominion in virtue of some belief common to the master with his subjects: he is the representative and minister of another power, superior to all human powers: he speaks and acts in the name of the Deity, or of some general idea; not in the name of the man himself, of a mere man. Feudal despotism is a different thing: it is the mere power of one individual over another, the domination and capricious will of a human being. . . . Such was the real, the distinctive character of the feudal dominion; and such the origin of the antipathy it never ceased to inspire."

Leaving the contemplation of the elementary molecule (as M. Guizot calls it) of feudal society, — a single possessor of a fief with his family and dependants, — and proceeding to consider the nature of the larger society, or state, which was formed by the aggregation of these small societies, we find the feudal *régime* to be absolutely incompatible with any real national existence. No doubt, the obligations of service on the one hand,

and protection on the other, theoretically attached to the concession of a fief, kept alive some faint notions of a general government, some feelings of social duty. But, in the whole duration of the system, it was never found practicable to attach to these rights and obligations any efficient sanction. A central government, with power adequate to enforce even the recognized duties of the feudal relation, or to keep the peace between the different members of the confederacy, did not and could not exist consistently with feudalism. The very essence of feudality was (to borrow M. Guizot's definition) the fusion of property and sovereignty. The lord of the soil was not only the master of all who dwelt upon it, but he was their only superior, their sovereign. Taxation, military protection, judicial administration, were his alone: for all offices of a ruler, the people looked to him, and could look to no other. The king was absolute, like all other feudal lords, within his own domain, and only there. He could neither compel obedience from his feudatories, nor impose his mediation as an arbitrator between them. Among such petty potentates, the only union compatible with the nature of the case was a federal union, — the most difficult to maintain of all political organizations; one which, resting almost entirely on moral sanctions and an enlightened sense of distant interests, requires, more than any other social system, an advanced state of civilization. The middle age was nowise ripe for it: the sword, therefore, remained the universal umpire; all questions were decided either by private war, or by that judicial combat which was the first attempt of society (as the modern duel is the

last) to subject the prosecution of a quarrel by force of arms to the moderating influence of fixed customs and ordinances.

The following is M. Guizot's summary of the influences of feudalism on the progress of the European nations : —

“Feudality must have exercised a considerable, and, on the whole, a salutary, influence on the internal development of the individual: it raised up in the human mind some moral notions and moral wants, some energetic sentiments; it produced some noble developments of character and passion. Considered in a social point of view, it was not capable of establishing legal order or political securities; but it was indispensable as a recommencement of European society, which had been so broken up by barbarism as to be unable to assume any more enlarged or more regular form. But the feudal form, radically bad in itself, admitted neither of being expanded nor regularized. The only political right which feudalism has planted deeply in European society is the right of resistance. I do not mean legal resistance: that was out of the question in a society so little advanced. The right of resistance which feudal society asserted and exercised was the right of personal resistance, — a fearful, an anti-social right, since it is an appeal to force, to war, the direct antithesis of society; but a right which never ought to perish from the breast of man, since its abrogation is simply equivalent to submission to slavery. The sentiment of this right had been lost in the degeneracy of Roman society, from the ruins of which it could not again arise: as little, in my opinion, was it a natural emanation from the principles of Christian society. Feudality re-introduced it into European life. It is the glory of civilization to render this right for ever useless and inactive: it is the glory of the feudal society to have constantly asserted and held fast to it.”

There is yet another aspect, and far from an unimportant one, in which feudal life has bequeathed, to the times which followed, a lesson worthy to be studied. Imperfect as the world still remains in justice and humanity, the feudal world was far inferior to it in those attributes, but greatly superior in individual strength of will, and decision of character.

“No reasonable person will deny the immensity of the social reform which has been accomplished in our times. Never have human relations been regulated with more justice, nor produced a more general well-being as the result. Not only this, but, I am convinced, a corresponding moral reform has also been accomplished: at no epoch, perhaps, has there been, all things considered, so much honesty in human life, so many human beings living in an orderly manner; never has so small an amount of public force been necessary to repress individual wrong-doing. But, in another respect, we have, I think, much to gain. We have lived for half a century under the empire of general ideas, more and more accredited and powerful; under the pressure of formidable, almost irresistible events. There has resulted a certain weakness, a certain effeminacy, in our minds and characters. Individual convictions and will are wanting in energy and confidence in themselves. Men assent to a prevailing opinion, obey a general impulse, yield to an external necessity. Whether for resistance or for action, each has but a mean idea of his own strength, a feeble reliance on his own judgment. Individuality, the inward and personal energy of man, is weak and timid. Amidst the progress of public liberty, many seem to have lost the proud and invigorating sentiment of their own personal liberty.

“Such was not the Middle Age. The condition of society was deplorable; the morality of mankind much inferior to what is often asserted, much inferior to that of our own time.

But, in many persons, individuality was strong, will was energetic. There were then few ideas which ruled all minds; few outward forces, which, in all situations and in all places, weighed upon men's characters. The individual unfolded himself in his own way, with an 'irregular freedom: the moral nature of man shone forth here and there, in all its ambitious aspirations, with all its energy. A contemplation not only dramatic and attaching, but instructive and useful; which offers us nothing to regret, nothing to imitate, but much to learn; were it only by awakening our attention to what is wanting in ourselves,—by showing to us of what a human being is capable when he will."\*

The third period of modern history, which is emphatically the modern period, is more complex, and more difficult to interpret, than the two preceding. Of this period, M. Guizot had only begun to treat; and we must not expect to find his explanations as satisfactory as in the earlier portions of his subject. The origin of feudalism, its character, its place in the history of civilization, he has discussed, as has been seen, in a manner which leaves little to be desired; but we cannot extend the same praise to his account of its decline, which (it is but fair to consider) is not completed, but which, so far as it has gone, appears to us to bear few marks of that piercing insight into the heart of a question, that determination not to be paid with a mere show of explanation, which are the characteristic excellences of the speculations thus far brought to notice.

M. Guizot ascribes the fall of feudality mainly to its imperfections. It did not, he says, contain in itself the elements of durability. It was a first step out of

\* Vol v. pp. 29-31.

barbarism, but too near the verge of the former anarchy to admit of becoming a permanent social organization. The independence of the possessors of fiefs was evidently excessive, and too little removed from the savage state. "Accordingly, independently of all foreign causes, feudal society, by its own nature and tendencies, was always in question, always on the brink of dissolution; incapable, at least, of subsisting regularly, or of developing itself, without altering its nature." \*

He then sets forth how, in the absence of any common superior, of any central authority capable of protecting the feudal chiefs against one another, they were content to seek protection where they could find it, — namely, from the most powerful among themselves; how, from this natural tendency, those who were already strong ever became stronger; the larger fiefs went on aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the weaker. "A prodigious inequality soon arose among the possessors of fiefs;" and inequality of strength led, as it usually does, to inequality of claims, and, at last, of recognized rights.

"Thus, from the mere fact that social ties were wanting to feudality, the feudal liberties themselves rapidly perished; the excesses of individual independence were perpetually compromising society itself; it found in the relations of the possessors of fiefs neither the means of regular maintenance, nor of ulterior development; it sought in other institutions the conditions which were needful to it for becoming permanent, regular, and progressive. The tendency towards centralization, towards the formation of a power superior to the local powers, was rapid. Long before the royal government

\* Vol. v. pp. 364-6.

had begun to intervene at every point of the country, there had grown up, under the name of duchies, counties, viscounties, &c., many smaller royalties, invested with the central government of this or that province, and to whom the rights of the possessors of fiefs, that is, of the local sovereignties, became more and more subordinate."\*

This sketch of the progressive decomposition of the feudal organization is, no doubt, historically correct; but we desiderate in it any approach to a scientific explanation of the phenomenon. That is an easy solution which accounts for the destruction of institutions from their own defects; but experience proves, that forms of government and social arrangements do not fall merely because they deserve to fall. The more backward and the more degraded any form of society is, the stronger is the tendency to remain stagnating in that state, simply because it is an existing state. We are unable to recognize, in this theory of the decay of feudality, the philosopher who so clearly demonstrated its origin; who pointed out that the feudal polity established itself, not because it was a good form of society, but because society was incapable of a better; because the rarity of communications, the limited range of men's ideas and of their social relations, and their want of skill to work political machinery of a delicate or complicated construction, disqualified them from being either chiefs or members of an organized association extending beyond their immediate neighborhood. If feudality was a product of this condition of the human mind, and the only form of polity which it admitted of, no evils inherent in feudality could have hindered it

\* Vol. v. pp. 370-71.



from continuing so long as that cause subsisted. The anarchy which existed as between one feudal chief and another — the inequality of their talents, and the accidents of their perpetual warfare — would have led to continual changes in the state of territorial possession, and large governments would have been often formed by the agglomeration of smaller ones ; occasionally, perhaps, a great empire like that of Charlemagne : but both the one and the other would have crumbled again to fragments as that did, if the general situation of society had continued to be what it was when the feudal system originated. Is not this the very history of society in a great part of the East, from the earliest record of events ? Between the time when masses could not help dissolving into particles, and the time when those particles spontaneously re-assembled themselves into masses, a great change must have taken place in the molecular properties of the atoms. Inasmuch as the petty district sovereignties of the first age of feudality coalesced into larger provincial sovereignties, which, instead of obeying the original tendency to decomposition, tended in the very contrary direction, towards ultimate aggregation into one national government, it is clear that the state of society had become compatible with extensive governments. The unfavorable circumstances which M. Guizot commemorated in the former period, had, in some manner, ceased to exist ; a great progress in civilization had been accomplished under the dominion and auspices of the feudal system ; and the fall of the system was not really owing to its vices, but to its good qualities, — to the improvement which had been found possible under it, and by which man-

kind had become desirous of obtaining, and capable of realizing, a better form of society than it afforded.

What this change was, and how it came to pass, M. Guizot has left us to seek. Considerable light is, no doubt, incidentally thrown upon it by the course of his investigations; and the sequel of his work would probably have illustrated it still more. At present, the philosophic interpreter of historical phenomena is indebted to him, on this portion of the subject, for little besides materials.

It was under the combined assaults of two powers — royalty from above, the emancipated commons from below — that the independence of the great vassals finally succumbed. M. Guizot has delineated with great force and perspicuity the rise of both these powers. His review of the origin and emancipation of the communes, and the growth of the *tiers-état*, is one of the best executed portions of the book; and should be read, with M. Thierry's "Letters on the History of France," as the moral of the tale. In his sixth volume, M. Guizot traces, with considerable minuteness, the progress of the royal authority, from its slumbering infancy in the time of the earlier Capetians, through its successive stages of growth, — now by the energy and craft of Philippe Auguste, now by the justice and enlightened policy of St. Louis, — to its attainment, not indeed of recognized despotism, but of almost unlimited power of actual tyranny, in the reign of Philippe le Bel. But on all these imputed causes of the fall of feudalism the question recurs, What caused the causes themselves? Why was that possible to the successors of Capet which had been impossible to those of Charlemagne? How,

under the detested feudal tyranny, had a set of fugitive serfs, who congregated for mutual protection at a few scattered points, and called them towns, become industrious, rich, and powerful? There can be but one answer: The feudal system, with all its deficiencies, was sufficiently a government, contained within itself a sufficient mixture of authority and liberty, afforded sufficient protection to industry, and encouragement and scope to the development of the human faculties, to enable the natural causes of social improvement to resume their course. What these causes were, and why they have been so much more active in Europe than in parts of the earth which were much earlier civilized, is far too difficult an inquiry to be entered upon in this place. We have already seen what M. Guizot has contributed to its elucidation in the way of general reflection. About the matter of fact, in respect to the feudal period, there can be no doubt. When the history of what are called the dark ages, because they had not yet a vernacular literature, and did not write a correct Latin style, shall be written as it deserves to be, that will be seen by all, which is already recognized by the great historical inquirers of the present time,—that at no period of history was human intellect more active, or society more unmistakably in a state of rapid advance, than during a great part of the so much vilified feudal period.

M. Guizot's detailed analysis of the history of European life is, as we before remarked, only completed for the period preceding the feudal. For the five centuries which extended from Clovis to the last of the Carolingians, he has given a finished delineation, not

only of outward life and political society, but of the progress and vicissitudes of what was then the chief refuge and hope of oppressed humanity, — the religious society, — the Church. He makes his readers acquainted with the legislation of the period, with the little it possessed of literature or philosophy, and with that which formed, as ought to be remembered, the real and serious occupation of its speculative faculties, — its religious labors, whether in the elaboration or in the propagation of the Christian doctrine. His analysis and historical exposition of the Pelagian controversy; his examination of the religious literature of the period, its sermons and legends, — are models of their kind; and he does not, like the old school of historians, treat these things as matters insulated and abstract, of no interest save what belongs to them intrinsically, but invariably looks at them as component parts of the general life of the age.

Of the feudal period, M. Guizot had not time to complete a similar delineation. His analysis even of the political society of the period is not concluded; and we are entirely without that review of its ecclesiastical history, and its intellectual and moral life, whereby the deficiency of explanation would probably have been in some degree supplied, which we have complained of in regard to the remarkable progress of human nature and its wants during those ages. For the strictly modern period of history he has done still less. The rapid sketch which occupies the concluding Lectures of the first volume does little towards resolving any of the problems in which there is real difficulty.

We shall therefore pass over the many topics on which he has touched cursorily, and without doing justice to his own powers of thought; and shall only further advert to one question, which is the subject of a detailed examination in the *Essay* in his earlier volume, — “The Origin of Representative Institutions in England;” a question not only of special interest to an English reader, but of much moment in the estimation of M. Guizot’s general theory of modern history. For, if the natural course of European events was such as that theory represents it, the history of England is an anomalous deviation from that course; and the exception must either prove, or go far to subvert, the rule. In England, as in other European countries, the basis of the social arrangements was, for several centuries, the feudal system; in England, as elsewhere, that system perished by the growth of the crown and of the emancipated commonalty. Whence came it, that, amidst general circumstances so similar, the immediate and apparent consequences were so strikingly contrasted? How happened it, that, in the Continental nations, absolute monarchy was at least the proximate result; while, in England, representative institutions, and an aristocratic government with an admixture of democratic elements, were the consequence?

M. Guizot’s explanation of the anomaly is just and conclusive. The feudal polity in England was from the first a less barbarous thing — had more in it of the elements from which a government might in time be constructed — than in the other countries of Europe. We have seen M. Guizot’s lively picture of the isolated

position and solitary existence of the seigneur, ruling from his inaccessible height, with sovereign power, over a scanty population ; having no superior above him, no equals around him, no communion or co-operation with any, save his family and dependants ; absolute master within a small circle, and with hardly a social tie, or any action or influence, beyond ; every thing, in short, in one narrow spot, and nothing in any other place. Now, of this picture, we look in vain for the original in our own history. English feudalism knew nothing of this independence and isolation of the individual feudatory in his fief. It could show no single vassal exempt from the habitual control of government, — no one so strong that the king's arm could not reach him. Early English history is made up of the acts of the barons, not the acts of this and that and the other baron. The cause of this is to be found in the circumstances of the Conquest. The Normans did not, like the Goths and Franks, overrun and subdue an almost unresisting population. They encamped in the midst of a people of spirit and energy, many times more numerous, and almost as warlike as themselves. That they prevailed over them at all was but the result of superior union. That union once broken, they would have been lost. They could not parcel out the country among them, spread themselves over it, and be each king in his own little domain, with nothing to fear save from the other petty kings who surrounded him. They were an army, and in an enemy's country ; and an army supposes a commander and military discipline. Organization of any kind implies power in the chief who presides over it, and holds it together. Add to

this, what various writers have remarked, — that the dispossession of the Saxon proprietors being effected not at once, but gradually, and the spoils not being seized upon by unconnected bands, but systematically portioned out by the head of the conquering expedition among his followers, — the territorial possessions of even the most powerful Norman chief were not concentrated in one place, but dispersed in various parts of the kingdom; and, whatever might be their total extent, he was never powerful enough in any given locality to make head against the king. From these causes, royalty was from the beginning much more powerful among the Anglo-Normans than it ever became in France while feudality remained in vigor. But the same circumstances which rendered it impossible for the barons to hold their ground against regal encroachments, except by combination, had kept up the power and the habit of combination among them. In French history, we never, until a late period, hear of confederacies among the nobles: English history is full of them. Instead of numerous unconnected petty potentates, one of whom was called the King, there are two great figures in English history, — a powerful king, and a powerful body of nobles. To give the needful authority to any act of general government, the concurrence of both was essential; and hence parliaments, elsewhere only occasional, were in England habitual. But the natural state of these rival powers was one of conflict; and the weaker side, which was usually that of the barons, soon found that it stood in need of assistance. Although the feudatory class, to use M. Guizot's expression, "had converted itself into a real

aristocratic corporation,"\* the barons were not strong enough "to impose at the same time on the king their liberty, and on the people their tyranny. As they had been obliged to combine for the sake of their own defence, so they found themselves under the necessity of calling in the people in aid of their coalition." †

The people, in England, were the Saxons, — a vanquished race, but whose spirit had never, like that of the other conquered populations, been completely broken. Being a German, not a Latin people, they retained the traditions, and some portion of the habits, of popular institutions and personal liberty. When called, therefore, to aid the barons in moderating the power of the crown, they claimed those ancient liberties as their part of the compact. French history abounds with charters of incorporation, which the kings granted, generally for a pecuniary consideration, to town communities which had cast off their *seigneurs*. The charters which English history is full of are concessions of general liberties to the whole body of the nation, — liberties which the nobility and the commons either wrung from the king by their united strength, or obtained from his voluntary policy as the purchase-money of their obedience. The series of these treaties, for such they in reality were, between the crown and the nation, beginning with the first Henry, and ending with the last renewal by Edward I. of the Great Charter of King John, are the principal incidents of English history during the feudal period. And thus, as M. Guizot observes in his concluding summary, "in France, from the foundation of the monarchy to the fourteenth century, every thing

\* *Essais*, p. 419.

† *Ib.*, p. 424.



was individual, — powers, liberties, oppression, and the resistance to oppression. Unity, the principle of all government; association of equals, the principle of all checks, — were only found in the narrow sphere of each *seigneurie* or each city. Royalty was nominal; the aristocracy did not form a body: there were burgesses in the towns, but no commons in the State. In England, on the contrary, from the Norman Conquest downwards, every thing was collective: similar powers, analogous situations, were compelled to approach one another, to coalesce, to associate. From its origin, royalty was real; while feudality ultimately grouped itself into two masses, one of which became the high aristocracy; the other, the body of the commons. Who can mistake, in this first travail of the formation of the two societies, in these so different characteristics of their early age, the true origin of the prolonged difference in their institutions and in their destinies?"

M. Guizot returns to this subject in a remarkable passage in the first volume of his Lectures,\* which presents the different character of the progress of civilization in England and in Continental Europe in so new and peculiar a light, that we cannot better conclude this article than by quoting it.

“When I endeavored to define the peculiar character of European civilization, compared with those of Asia and of antiquity, I showed that it was superior in variety, richness, and complication; that it never fell under the dominion of any exclusive principle; that the different elements of society co-existed, and modified one another, and were always compelled to compromises and mutual toleration. This, which is

\* Vol i., Lecture 14.

the general character of European, has been, above all, that of English civilization. In England, civil and spiritual powers, aristocracy, democracy, and royalty, local and central institutions, moral and political development, have advanced together, if not always with equal rapidity, yet at no great distance after one another. Under the Tudors, for example, at the time of the most conspicuous advances of pure monarchy, the democratic principle, the power of the people, was also rising, and gaining strength. The revolution of the seventeenth century breaks out: it is at once a religious and a political one. The feudal aristocracy appears in it, much weakened indeed, and with the signs of *décadence*, but still in a condition to take a part, to occupy a position, and have its share in the results. It is thus with English history throughout: no old element ever perishes entirely, nor is any new one wholly triumphant; no partial principle ever obtains exclusive ascendancy. There is always simultaneous development of the different social powers, and a compromise among their pretensions and interests.

“The march of Continental civilization has been less complex and less complete. The several elements of society, religious and civil, monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic, grew up, and came to maturity, not simultaneously, but successively. Each system, each principle, has in some degree had its turn. One age belongs, it would be too much to say exclusively, but with a very marked predominance, to feudal aristocracy, for example; another, to the monarchical principle; another, to the democratic. Compare the Middle Age in France and in England, the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries of our history, with the corresponding centuries north of the Channel. In France, you find, at that epoch, feudality nearly absolute, — the crown and the democratic principle almost null. In England, the feudal aristocracy no doubt predominates; but the crown and the democracy are not without strength and importance. Royalty triumphs in Eng-

land under Elizabeth, as in France under Louis XIV.; but how many *ménagements* it is compelled to observe! how many restrictions, aristocratic and democratic, it has to submit to! In England also, each system, each principle, has had its turn of predominance; but never so completely, never so exclusively, as on the Continent. The victorious principle has always been constrained to tolerate the presence of its rivals, and to concede to each a certain share of influence."

The advantageous side of the effect of this more equable development is evident enough.

"There can be no doubt that this simultaneous unfolding of the different social elements has greatly contributed to make England attain, earlier than any of the Continental nations, to the establishment of a government at once orderly and free. It is the very business of government to negotiate with all interests and all powers, to reconcile them with each other, and make them live and prosper together. Now, this, from a multitude of causes, was already in a peculiar degree the disposition, and even the actual state, of the different elements of English society: a general and tolerably regular government had therefore less difficulty in constituting itself. So, again, the essence of liberty is the simultaneous manifestation and action of all interests, all rights, all social elements and forces. England, therefore, was already nearer to it than most other States. From the same causes, national good sense, and intelligence of public affairs, formed itself at an earlier period. Good sense in politics consists in taking account of all facts, appreciating them, and giving to each its place: this, in England, was a necessity of her social condition, a natural result of the course of her civilization."

But to a nation, as to an individual, the consequences of doing every thing by halves, of adopting compromise as the universal rule, of never following out a general

idea or principle to its utmost results, are by no means exclusively favorable. Hear, again, M. Guizot : —

“ In the Continental States, each system or principle having had its turn of a more complete and exclusive predominance, they unfolded themselves on a larger scale, with more grandeur and *éclat*. Royalty and feudal aristocracy, for example, made their appearance on the Continental scene of action with more boldness, more expansion, more freedom. All political experiments, so to speak, have been fuller and more complete.” [This is still more strikingly true of the present age, and its great popular revolutions.] “ And hence it has happened that political ideas and doctrines (I mean those of an extended character, and not simple good sense applied to the conduct of affairs) have assumed a loftier character, and unfolded themselves with greater intellectual vigor. Each system having presented itself to observation in some sort alone, and having remained long on the scene, it has been possible to survey it as a whole ; to ascend to its first principles, descend to its remotest consequences ; in short, fully to complete its theory. Whoever observes attentively the genius of the English nation will be struck with two facts, — the sureness of its common sense and practical ability ; its deficiency of general ideas and commanding intellect, as applied to theoretical questions. If we open an English book of history, jurisprudence, or any similar subject, we seldom find in it the real foundation, the ultimate reason, of things. In all matters, and especially in politics, pure doctrine and philosophy — science properly so called — have prospered far more on the Continent than in England : they have at least soared higher, with greater vigor and boldness. Nor does it admit of doubt, that the different character of the development of the two civilizations has greatly contributed to this result.”

## EARLY GRECIAN HISTORY AND LEGEND.

(A REVIEW OF THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES OF GROTE'S  
"HISTORY OF GREECE."\*)

THE interest of Grecian history is unexhausted and inexhaustible. As a mere story, hardly any other portion of authentic history can compete with it. Its characters, its situations, the very march of its incidents, are epic. It is a heroic poem, of which the personages are peoples. It is also, of all histories of which we know so much, the most abounding in consequences to us who now live. The true ancestors of the European nations (it has been well said) are not those from whose blood they are sprung, but those from whom they derive the richest portion of their inheritance. The battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings. If the issue of that day had been different, the Britons and the Saxons might still have been wandering in the woods.

The Greeks are also the most remarkable people who have yet existed; not, indeed, if by this be meant those who have approached nearest (if such an expression may be used where all are at so immeasurable a distance) to the perfection of social arrangements or of human character. Their institutions, their way of life, even that which is their greatest distinction, the

\* Edinburgh Review, October, 1846.

cast of their sentiments, and development of their faculties, were radically inferior to the best (we wish it could be said to the collective) products of modern civilization. It is not the results achieved, but the powers and efforts required to make the achievement, that measure their greatness as a people. They were the beginners of nearly every thing, Christianity excepted, of which the modern world makes its boast. If, in several things, they were but few removes from barbarism, they alone among nations, so far as is known to us, emerged from barbarism by their own efforts, not following in the track of any more advanced people. If with them, as in all antiquity, slavery existed as an institution, they were not the less the originators of political freedom, and the grand exemplars and sources of it to modern Europe. If their discords, jealousies, and wars between city and city, caused the ruin of their national independence, yet the arts of war and government evolved in those intestine contests made them the first who united great empires under civilized rule; the first who broke down those barriers of petty nationality, which had been so fatal to themselves; and, by making Greek ideas and language common to large regions of the earth, commenced that general fusion of races and nations, which, followed up by the Romans, prepared the way for the cosmopolitanism of modern times.

They were the first people who had a historical literature; as perfect of its kind (though not the highest kind) as their oratory, their poetry, their sculpture, and their architecture. They were the founders of mathematics; of physics; of the inductive study of politics,

so early exemplified in Aristotle; of the philosophy of human nature and life. In each they made the indispensable first steps, which are the foundation of all the rest, — steps such as could only have been made by minds intrinsically capable of every thing which has since been accomplished. With a religious creed eminently unfavorable to speculation, because affording a ready supernatural solution of all natural phenomena, they yet originated freedom of thought. They, the first, questioned nature and the universe by their rational faculties, and brought forth answers not suggested by any established system of priestcraft; and their free and bold spirit of speculation it was, which, surviving in its results, broke the yoke of another inthralling system of popular religion, sixteen hundred years after they had ceased to exist as a people. These things were effected in two centuries' of national existence: twenty and upwards have since elapsed; and it is sad to think how little, comparatively, has been accomplished.

To give a faithful and living portraiture of such a people; to show what they were and did, and as much as possible of the means by which they did it, — by what causes so meteor-like a manifestation of human nature was produced or aided, and by what faults or necessities it was arrested; to deduce, from the qualities which the Greeks displayed collectively or individually, and from the modes in which those qualities were unconsciously generated or intentionally cultivated, the appropriate lessons for the guidance of our own world, — is an enterprise never yet attempted systematically, nor attempted successfully at all. Such is the declared object of the work of which the first two volumes lie

before us. "First to embody in his own mind, and next to lay out before his readers, the general picture of the Grecian world," is Mr. Grote's description of his task. "The historian," he says, "will especially study to exhibit the spontaneous movement of Grecian intellect, sometimes aided, but never borrowed, from without, and lighting up a small portion of a world otherwise clouded and stationary; and to set forth the action of that social system, which, while insuring to the mass of freemen a degree of protection elsewhere unknown, acted as a stimulus to the creative impulses of genius, and left the inferior minds sufficiently unshackled to soar above religious and political routine, to overshoot their own age, and to become the teachers of posterity." \*

In this undertaking, there is work for a succession of thinkers; nor will it be brought to completeness by any one historian or philosopher. But the qualifications of Mr. Grote, and the contents of these two volumes, give assurance that he will be remembered, not only as the first who has seriously undertaken the work, but as one who will have made great steps towards accomplishing it. In ascribing to him the first attempt at a philosophical history of Greece, we mean no disparagement to the very valuable labors of his predecessor and friend, Bishop Thirlwall. That distinguished scholar has done much for the facts of Grecian history. Before him, no one had applied to those facts, considered as a whole, the most ordinary canons of historical credibility. The only modern historian of Greece who attempted, or even affected, criticism on evidence, Mr. Mitford, made almost no other use of it than to find

\* Preface, pp vii. viii.



reasons for rejecting all statements discreditable to any despot or usurper. Dr. Thirlwall has effectually destroyed Mitford as an historical authority, by substituting (though so unostentatiously as to give no sufficient idea of the service rendered) a candid and impartial narrative for the most prejudiced misrepresentation by which party passion has been known to pervert the history of a distant time and a foreign people. But Dr. Thirlwall's, though highly and justly esteemed as a critical, does not attempt to be a philosophical history; nor was such an attempt to be expected from its original purpose. And though, in its progress, it has far outgrown in bulk, and still more in amplitude of scope and permanent value, its primitive design, the plan has not been fundamentally altered; and the most important part of Mr. Grote's undertaking has not been, in any respect, forestalled by it.

The portion which Mr. Grote has completed, and which is now published, appears at some disadvantage, from its not including even the beginning of the part of Grecian history which is of chief interest either to the common or to the philosophical reader. Mr. Grote, in his preface, laments that the religious and poetical attributes of the Greek mind appear thus far in disproportionate relief, as compared with its powers of acting, organizing, judging, and speculating. He might have added, that the religion and the poetry are only those of the most primitive period; the time before which, nothing is known. A volume and a half are devoted to the legendary age; and the remaining half-volume does not carry us much beyond the first dawn of real history.

The legends of Greece, Mr. Grote relates at greater length than has been thought necessary by any of his predecessors. This is incident to the design, which no one before him had seriously entertained, of making the history of Greece a picture of the Greek mind. There is no more important element in the mind of Greece than the legends. They constituted the belief of the Greeks of the historical period concerning their own past. They formed also the Grecian religion; and the religion of an early people is the groundwork of its primitive system of thought on all subjects. Mr. Grote makes no distinction between the legends of the gods and those of the heroes. He relates the one and the other literally, as they were told by the poets, and believed by the general public, down to the time of the Roman Empire. He makes no attempt to discriminate historical matter in the stories of heroes, no more than in those of the gods. Not doubting that some of them do contain such matter; that many of the tales of the heroic times are partially grounded on incidents which really happened, — he thinks it useless to attempt to conjecture what these were. The siege of Troy is to him no more an historical fact than the births and amours of the gods as recorded in Hesiod. The only thing which he deems historical in either is, that the Greeks believed them, and the poets sung them. Whether they were believed from the first, as they were afterwards, on the authority of poets, or the poets grounded their narratives on stories already current, we have no means of ascertaining: in some cases, the one thing may have happened; in some, the other. In Mr. Grote's view, it is immaterial, since neither the

poems nor the so-called traditions bear, in his eyes, the smallest character of historical evidence.

This is essentially the doctrine of Niebuhr; and, in the hands of that eminent investigator of antiquity, it has, by English scholars, generally been accepted as subversive of the previously received view of Roman history. But no one, not even the translator of Niebuhr, Dr. Thirlwall, had applied this doctrine in the same unsparing manner to the Greek legends. Unqualified rejection has been confined to the stories of the gods. Between them and those of the heroes, a Greek would have been unable to see any difference. To his mind, both rested on the same identical testimony; both were alike part of his religious creed: supernatural agency, and supernatural motives and springs of action, are the pervading soul as much of the heroic as of the divine legends; the gods themselves appear in them quite as prominently; and even the heroes are real, though inferior, divinities. By moderns, however, the supernatural machinery (as it is called by critics profoundly ignorant of the spirit of antiquity) has been treated as a sort of scaffolding which could be taken down, instead of the main framework and support of the structure. The history of the Trojan war has been written on the authority of the "Iliad," suppressing only the intervention of the gods, and whatever seemed romantic or improbable in the human motives and characters. As much credit is thus accorded to the poet, in all but the minute details of his narrative, as is given to the most veracious witness in a court of justice; since even with him we do no more than believe his statements where they are neither

incredible in themselves, nor contradicted by more powerful testimony. With this mode of dealing with legendary narratives, Mr. Grote is altogether at war. His discussion of the credibility of what are called traditions is eminently original, evolving into distinctness principles and canons of evidence and belief, which, by Niebuhr, are rather implicitly assumed than directly stated.

The following passages will give a clear idea of Mr. Grote's main position : —

“In applying the semi-historical theory to Grecian mythical narrative, it has been often forgotten that a certain strength of testimony, or positive ground of belief, must first be tendered before we can be called upon to discuss the antecedent probability or improbability of the incidents alleged. The belief of the Greeks themselves, without the smallest aid from special or cotemporary witnesses, has been tacitly assumed as sufficient to support the case, provided only sufficient deduction be made from the mythical narratives to remove all antecedent improbabilities. It has been assumed that the faith of the people must have rested originally upon some particular historical event, involving the identical persons, things, and places which the original myths exhibit, or at least the most prominent among them. But, when we examine the psychagogic influences predominant in the society among whom this belief originally grew up, we shall see that their belief is of little or no evidentiary value, and that the growth and diffusion of it may be satisfactorily explained without supposing any special basis of matters of fact.

“The general disposition to adopt the semi-historical theory as to the genesis of Grecian myths arises in part from reluctance in critics to impute to the mythopœic ages extreme credulity or fraud, and from the presumption, that, where

much is believed, some portion of it must be true. There would be some weight in these grounds of reasoning, if the ages under discussion had been supplied with records, and accustomed to critical inquiry. But amongst a people unprovided with the former, and strangers to the latter, credulity is necessarily at its maximum, as well in the narrator himself as in his hearers: the idea of deliberate fraud is, moreover, inapplicable; for, if the hearers are disposed to accept what is related to them as a revelation from the Muse, the *æstrus* of composition is quite sufficient to impart a similar persuasion to the poet whose mind is penetrated with it. The belief of that day can hardly be said to stand apart by itself as an act of reason: it becomes confounded with vivacious imagination and earnest emotion; and, in every case where these mental excitabilities are powerfully acted upon, faith comes unconsciously, and as a matter of course.

“It is, besides, a presumption far too largely and indiscriminately applied, even in our own advanced age, that, where much is believed, something must necessarily be true; that accredited fiction is always traceable to some basis of historical truth. The influence of imagination and feeling is not confined simply to the process of retouching, transforming, or magnifying narratives originally founded on fact: it will often create new narratives of its own, without any such preliminary basis. Where there is any general body of sentiment pervading men living in society, whether it be religious or political, — love, admiration, or antipathy, — all incidents tending to illustrate that sentiment are eagerly believed, rapidly circulated, and (as a general rule) easily accredited. If real incidents are not at hand, impressive fictions will be provided to satisfy the demand: the perfect harmony of such fictions with the prevalent feeling stands in the place of certifying testimony, and causes men to hear them, not merely with credence, but even with delight: to call them in question, and require proof, is a task which cannot be undertaken without

incurring obloquy. Of such tendencies in the human mind, abundant evidence is furnished by the innumerable religious legends which have acquired currency in various parts of the world, — legends which derived their origin, not from special facts misreported and exaggerated, but from pious feelings pervading the society, and translated into narrative by forward and imaginative minds, — legends in which not merely the incidents, but often even the personages, are unreal, yet in which the generating sentiment is conspicuously discernible, providing its own matter as well as its own form. Other sentiments also, as well as the religious, provided they be fervent and widely diffused, will find expression in current narrative, and become portions of the general public belief: every celebrated and notorious character is the source of a thousand fictions exemplifying his peculiarities. And if it be true, as I think present observation may show us, that such creative agencies are even now visible and effective, when the materials of genuine history are copiously and critically studied, much more are we warranted in concluding, that in ages destitute of records, strangers to historical testimony, and full of belief in divine inspiration, both as to the future and as to the past, narratives purely fictitious will acquire ready and uninquiring credence, provided only they be plausible, and in harmony with the preconceptions of the auditors.” — Vol. i. pp. 572-9.

The two points here insisted upon are the large space which sheer and absolute fiction still occupies in human beliefs, — a place naturally larger as we recede further into a remote and uncritical antiquity; and the tendency of any strong and widely diffused feeling to embody itself in fictitious narratives, which pass from mouth to mouth, and grow into traditions.

These points have been illustrated in a more quotable,

because a more condensed form, in a fugitive publication, of which Mr. Grote here acknowledges the authorship. From this we borrow an illustration, too apt to be dispensed with, — a modern myth, caught in the act of formation. Among the “numerous fictions,” which, in the words of Mr. Moore’s *Life of Byron*, have been “palmed upon the world” as his “romantic tours and wonderful adventures in places he never saw, and with persons that never existed,” one is thus recounted, in a review of the poem of “*Manfred*,” by no less a person than Goethe : —

“He (Byron) has often enough confessed what it is that torments him. There are, properly speaking, two females whose phantoms for ever haunt him, and in this piece also perform principal parts, — one under the name of Astarte; the other without form or presence, and merely a voice. Of the horrid occurrence which took place with the former, the following is related: When a bold and enterprising young man, he won the affections of a Florentine lady. Her husband discovered the amour, and murdered his wife; but the murderer was the same night found dead in the street, and there was no one to whom suspicion could be attached. Lord Byron removed from Florence, and these spirits haunted him all his life after. This romantic incident is rendered highly probable by innumerable allusions to it in his poems.”

On this, Mr. Grote comments as follows : —

“The story which Goethe relates of the intrigue and double murder at Florence is not a misreported fact: it is a pure and absolute fiction. It is not a story of which one part is true, and another part false; nor in which you can hope, by removing ever so much of superficial exaggeration, to reach at last a subsoil of reality. All is alike untrue, the basis as well as

the details. In the mind of the original inventor, the legend derived its birth, not from any erroneous description which had reached his ears respecting adventures of the real Lord Byron, but from the profound and vehement impression which Lord Byron's poetry had made both upon him and upon all others around him. The poet appeared to be breathing out his own soul and sufferings in the character of his heroes; we ought rather to say, of his hero, *πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφή μία*. He seemed like one struck down, as well as inspired, by some strange visitation of destiny. In what manner, and from what cause, had the Eumenides been induced thus to single him out as their victim? A large circle of deeply-moved readers, and amongst them the greatest of all German authors, cannot rest until this problem be solved: either a fact must be discovered, or a fiction invented for the solution. The minds of all being perplexed by the same mystery, and athirst for the same explanation, nothing is wanted except a *prima vox*. Some one, more forward and more felicitous than the rest, imagines and proclaims the tragical narrative of the Florentine married couple. So happily does the story fit in, that the inventor seems only to have given clear utterance to that which others were dimly shadowing out in their minds: the lacerated feelings of the poet are no longer an enigma; the die which has stamped upon his verses their peculiar impress has been discovered, and exhibited to view. If, indeed, we ask what is the authority for the tale,—to speak in the Homeric language, it has been suggested by some god, or by the airy-tongued Ossa, the bearer of encouragement and intelligence from omniscient Zeus: to express the same idea in homely and infantine English, it has been whispered by a little bird. But we may be pretty well assured, that few of the audience will raise questions about authority: the story drops into its place like the keystone of an arch, and exactly fills the painful vacancy in their minds; it seems to carry with it the



same sort of evidence as the key which imparts meaning to a manuscript in cipher, and they are too well pleased with the acquisition to be very nice as to the title. Nay, we may go further, and say, that the man who demonstrates its falsehood will be the most unwelcome of all instructors: so that we trust, for the comfort of Goethe's last years, that he was spared the pain of seeing his interesting mythus about Lord Byron contemptuously blotted out by Mr. Moore."

Suppose that there had never been any authentic biography of Byron, and that, his own works and the various testimonies about his personality having all perished, his name were carried down to a remote age exclusively by this writing of Goethe. The case would then be parallel with that of the heroic age of Greece; and the following passage describes what would probably have happened:—

"In former days, the Florentine intrigue, and the other stories noticed by Mr. Moore, would have obtained undisputed currency as authentic materials for the Life of Lord Byron: then would have succeeded rationalizing historians, who, treating the stories as true at the bottom, would have proceeded to discriminate the basis of truth from the accessories of fiction. One man would have disbelieved the supposed murder of the wife, another that of the husband: a third would have said, that, the intrigue having been discovered, the husband and wife had both retired into convents, the one under feelings of deep distress, the other in bitter repentance; and that, the fleshly lusts being thus killed, it was hence erroneously stated that the husband and wife had themselves been killed. If the reader be not familiar with the Greek scholiasts, we are compelled to assure him that the last explanation would have found much favor in their eyes, inasmuch as it saves the necessity of giving the direct lie to

any one, or of saying that any portion of the narrative is absolutely unfounded. The misfortune is, that though the story would thus be divested of all its salient features, and softened down into something very sober and colorless, perhaps even edifying, yet it would not be one whit nearer the actual matter of fact. Something very like what we have been describing, however, would infallibly have taken place, had we not been protected by a well-informed biographer, and by the copious memoranda of a positive age."

The feelings to which the early Grecian legends addressed themselves, and to which they owed not their currency only, but most of them probably their very existence, were sentiments most strong and pervading, — the religious feelings of the people, and their ancestral feelings. The two, indeed, may be reduced to one; for the ancestral were also, in the most literal sense, religious feelings. The legendary ancestors of each family, tribe, or race, were the immediate descendants of deities, — were immortal beings, with supernatural powers to destroy or save, and worshipped with the rites and honors paid to gods. The difference between them and the gods was chiefly this, — that they had once been men, and had performed exploits on earth which were the pride and glory of other men still living, who honored them as patrons and guardian divinities; a distinction in no way tending to abate the thirst for wonderful tales respecting the heroes.

If a story harmonized with the prevailing sentiment, to doubt its truth would never occur to any one, — not even to the inventors themselves; since, in a rude age, the suggestions of vivid imagination and strong feeling are always deemed the promptings of a god. The

inspiration of the Muse was not then a figure of speech, but the sincere and artless belief of the people: the bard and the prophet were analogous characters. Demodocus, at the court of King Alcinous, could sing the Trojan war by revelation from Apollo or from a Muse; \* and Hesiod, in the Theogony, could declare respecting himself, that he knew, by the favor of the Muses, the past, the present, and the future. Herodotus expressly says that Hesiod and Homer "were the authors of the Greek Theogony, gave titles to the gods, distinguished their attributes and functions, and described their forms;" that, until taught by them, the Greeks were ignorant "whence each of the gods sprang, and whether all of them were always existing, and what were their shapes." † Plato invariably assumes the same thing. The poems were a kind of sacred books, like the Ramayun and the Mahabharat.

It may perhaps be said, that the eager interest here supposed in the exploits of ancestors implies the ancestors to be at least real persons, surviving in the memory of those to whom the tales were told; and that therefore most of the heroes of legend must have really existed, however much of the marvellous in their adventures may be due to the imagination of their descendants. This doctrine would not be without plausi-

\* Odyssey, viii. 487-91.

† We have used Dr. Thirlwall's translation. The original words are — Ἐνθεν δε ἐγένετο ἕκαστος τῶν θεῶν, εἴτε δ' αἶε ἦσαν πάντες, ὅκοιοι τὲ τινες τὰ εἶδεα, οὐκ ἠπιστέατο [οἱ Ἕλληνας] μέχρι οὐ πρόην τε καὶ χθές, ὡς εἰπεῖν λόγῳ Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὀμηρον ἠλικίην τετρακοσίοιοι ἔτεσι δοκέω μου πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι, καὶ οὐ πλέοσι οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἕλλησι, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες, καὶ τιμὰς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες, καὶ εἶδεα αἰτῶν σημήναντες. — Herod., ii. 53.

bility, were it not the known practice of the early Greeks to create not only imaginary adventures of ancestors, but imaginary ancestors. It was the universal theory of Greece, that every name, common to an aggregation of persons, indicated a common progenitor. Whether it was the name of a race, as Dorians, Ionians, Achæans; of a people, as Thessalians, Dolopians, Arcadians, Ætolians; of any of the numerous political divisions of a people, or of those other divisions not made by laws, but held together by religious rites and a traditional tie, the *γένη* or *gentes* (representing, probably, the units by the aggregation of which the community had, at some early period, been formed), — all these, as well as many names of towns and localities, were believed to be etymologically derived from a primeval founder and patriarch of the whole tribe. Even names of which the origin was obvious did not escape the application of the theory. The names of the four tribes in the primitive Athenian constitution, Geleontes, Hopletes, Argades, and Aigikoreis, — appellations so evidently derived from their occupations, — were ascribed, according to custom, to four Eponymi, sons of Ion, the general ancestor of the race, whose names were Geleon, Hoples, Argades, and Aigikores. No one now makes any scruple of rejecting the whole class of Eponymi, or name-heroes, from the catalogue of historical personages. Among the Greeks; however, they were the most precious of any: they were as firmly believed in, and their existence and adventures as justly entitled to the name of tradition, as any Grecian legend whatever.

But grant that the personages of the heroic legends

were real, as doubtless some warriors and rulers must have left behind them an enduring memory, to which legends would not fail to attach themselves: could we distinguish among the names those which belonged to actual persons, would it follow that the actions ascribed to them bore a resemblance to any real occurrences? We may judge from a parallel instance. In the earlier Middle Ages, the European mind had returned to something like the *naïf* unsuspecting faith of primitive times. It accordingly gave birth to a profusion of legends; those of saints, in the first place, almost a literature in themselves, of which, though very pertinent to our purpose, we say nothing here. But the same age produced the counterpart of the tales of Hercules and Theseus, of the wanderings of Ulysses, and the Argonautic expedition, in the shape of romances of chivalry. Like the Homeric poems, the romances announced themselves as true narratives, and were, down to the fourteenth century, popularly believed as such. The majority relate to personages probably altogether fictitious: Amadis and Lancelot we are nowise called upon to believe in; and of King Arthur, as of King Agamemnon, we have no means of ascertaining if he ever really existed or not. But the uncertainty does not extend to all these romantic heroes. That age, unlike the Homeric, notwithstanding its barbarism, preserved written records; and we know, consequently, from other evidence than the romances themselves, that some of the names they contain are real. Charlemagne is not only an historical character, but one whose life is tolerably well known to us; and so genuine a hero, both in war and peace, — his real actions so surprising

and admirable, — that fiction itself might have been content with ornamenting his true biography, instead of fitting him with another entirely fabulous. The age, however, required, to satisfy its ideal, a Charlemagne of a different complexion from the real monarch. The chronicle of Archbishop Turpin, a compilation of poetic legends, supplied this want. Though containing hardly any thing historical, except the name of Charlemagne, and the fact of an expedition into Spain, it was declared genuine history by Pope Calixtus the Second; was received as such by Vincent de Beauvais, who, for his great erudition, was made preceptor to the sons of the wise king, St. Louis, of France; and from this, not from Eginhard or the monk of St. Gall, the poets who followed drew the materials of their narrative. Even, then, if Priam and Hector were real persons, the siege of Troy by the Greeks may be as fabulous as that of Paris by the Saracens, or Charlemagne's conquest of Jerusalem. In the poem of Ariosto, the principal hero and heroine are Ruggiero and Bradamante, the ancestors, real or imaginary, of the dukes of Ferrara, at whose court he lived and wrote. Does any one, for this reason, believe a syllable of the adventures which he ascribes either to these or to his other characters? Another personage of legend, who is also a personage of history, is Virgil. If the author of the "Æneid" were only known to us by the traditions of the Middle Ages, in what character would he have been transmitted to us? In that of a mighty enchanter. Such is the worth of what is called tradition, even when the persons are real, and the age not destitute of records. What must it be in times anterior to the use of writing?

It is now almost forgotten, that England, too, had a mythic history, once received as genuine; and neither has this wanted the consecration of the highest poetical genius, — in the instances, at least, of Lear and Cymbeline.

“If we take the history of our own country, as it was conceived and written, from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, by Hardyng, Fabyan, Grafton, Holinshed, and others, we shall find that it was supposed to begin with Brute the Trojan, and was carried down from thence, for many ages, and through a long succession of kings, to the times of Julius Cæsar. A similar belief of descent from Troy, arising seemingly from a reverential imitation of the Romans and of their Trojan origin, was cherished in the fancy of other European nations. With regard to the English, the chief circulator of it was Geoffrey of Monmouth; and it passed, with little resistance or dispute, into the national faith. The kings, from Brute downwards, were enrolled in regular chronological series, with their respective dates annexed. In a dispute which took place during the reign of Edward I. (A.D. 1301) between England and Scotland, the descent of the kings of England from Brute the Trojan was solemnly embodied in a document put forth to sustain the rights of the crown of England, as an argument bearing on the case then in discussion; and it passed without attack from the opposing party: \* an incident which reminds us of the appeal made by Æschines, in the contention between the Athenians and Philip of Macedon respecting Amphipolis, to the primitive dotal rights of Akamas, son of Theseus; and also of the defence urged by

\* See Warton's "History of English Poetry," sec. iii. p. 131. "No man, before the sixteenth century, presumed to doubt that the Franks derived their origin from Francus, the son of Hector; that the Spaniards were descended from Japhet, the Britons from Brutus, and the Scotch from Fergus." — *Ibid.*, p. 140; *Author's Note.*

the Athenians to sustain their conquest of Sigeium against the reclamations of the Mitylenæans, wherein the former alleged that they had as much right to the place as any of the other Greeks who had formed part of the victorious armament of Agamemnon.

“The tenacity with which this early series of British kings was defended is no less remarkable than the facility with which it was admitted. The chroniclers, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, warmly protested against the intrusive scepticism which would cashier so many venerable sovereigns, and deface so many noble deeds. They appealed to the patriotic feelings of their hearers, represented the enormity of their setting up a presumptuous criticism against the belief of ages, and insisted on the danger of the precedent, as regarded history generally. Yet, in spite of so large a body of authority and precedent, the historians of the nineteenth century begin the history of England with Julius Cæsar. They do not attempt either to settle the date of King Bladud’s accession, or to determine what may be the basis of truth in the affecting narrative of Lear.”\* — Vol. i. pp. 639–42.

We will add, before taking our leave of this part of the subject, one argument more, which we conceive to be in itself almost decisive. Authentic history, as we ascend the stream of time, grows thinner and scantier, the incidents fewer, and the narratives less circumstantial, — shading off, through every degree of twilight, into the darkness of night. And such a gradual day-break we find in Greek history, at and shortly before

\* Even in 1754, Dr. Zachary Grey, in his Notes on Shakspeare, commenting on the passage in “King Lear,” *Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness*, says, “This is one of Shakspeare’s most remarkable anachronisms. King Lear succeeded his father Bladud, *anno mundi* 3105; and Nero, *anno mundi* 4017, was sixteen years old when he married Octavia, Cæsar’s daughter.” — See *Funcii Chronologia*, p. 94. — *Author’s Note*.



the first Olympiad (B.C. 776), — the point from which the historical Greeks commenced their computation of time. We cannot be far wrong in fixing this as the epoch at which written characters began to be regularly employed by public authority for the recordation of periodical religious solemnities; always the first events systematically recorded, on account of the fearful religious consequences attaching to any mistake in the proper period of their celebration.

But if, beyond the darkness which bounds this early morning of history, we come suddenly into the full glare of day, — an island of light in the dark ocean of the unrecorded past, peopled with majestic forms, and glittering with splendid scenery, — we may be well assured that the vision is as unreal as Plato's Atlantis; and that the traditions and the poems which vouch for its past existence are the offspring of fancy, not of memory. True history is not thus interrupted in its course: it does not, like the Arcadian rivers, sink into the ground, and, after a long disappearance, rise again at a remote point. Light first, and darkness afterwards, may be the order of invention; but it is seldom that of remembrance.

The elaborate chapter in which Mr. Grote traces the progress of opinion among instructed Greeks respecting their own legends is important, not only in reference to the question of credibility, but as a part of the history of the human mind. Originating in a rude age, by which they were naïvely and literally believed, the legends descended into a period of comparative knowledge and culture. With the tone of that later age, or

at least of the instructed portion of it, they were no longer in harmony. Several things conspired to produce this divergence. As communications grew more frequent, and travelled men became acquainted with legends for which they had acquired no early reverence, the mutually contradictory character of the stories themselves tended to undermine their authority. The characters and actions ascribed to the gods and heroes contained much that was repugnant to the altered moral feelings of a more civilized epoch: already Xenophanes, one of the earliest Grecian philosophical inquirers, composed poems to denounce, in the most vehement terms, the stories related of the gods by Hesiod and Homer, "the universal instructor," as he terms him. But, more than all, the commencement of physical science, and intelligent observation of nature, introduced a conception of the universe, and a mode of interpreting its phenomena, in continual conflict with the simplicity of ancient faith; accustoming men to refer to physical causes and natural laws what were conceived by their ancestors as voluntary interventions of supernatural beings, in wrath or favor to mortals.

This altered tone in the more cultivated part of the Grecian mind did not, however, proceed to actual disbelief in the legendary religion of the people. Mankind do not pass abruptly from one connected system of thought to another: they first exhaust every contrivance for reconciling the two. To break entirely with the religion of their forefathers would have been a disruption of old feelings, too painful and difficult for the average strength even of superior minds; and could

not have been done openly, without incurring a certainty of the fate, which, with all the precautions they adopted, overtook Anaxagoras and Socrates. But, even of the philosophers, there were at first very few who carried the spirit of free-thinking so far. In general, they were unable to emancipate themselves from the old religious traditions, but were just as little capable of believing them literally. "The result was a new impulse, partaking of both the discordant forces, — one of those thousand unconscious compromises between the rational convictions of the mature man, and the indelible illusions of early faith, religious as well as patriotic, which human affairs are so often destined to exhibit." The legends, in their obvious sense, were no longer credible; but it was necessary to find for them a meaning in which they could be believed. And hence a series of efforts, continued with increasing energy from the first known prose historian, Hecataeus, to the Neoplatonic adversaries of Christianity in the school of Alexandria, to which the nearest parallel is the attempts of Paulus and the German rationalists to explain away the Hebrew Scriptures. Rejected in their obvious interpretation, the narratives were admitted in some other sense, which stripped them of the direct intervention of any deity. They were represented either as ordinary histories, colored by poetic ornament, or allegories, in which moral instruction, physical knowledge, or esoteric religious doctrines, were designedly wrapped up. The succession of these rationalizing explanations is recounted at length, with great learning and philosophy, by Mr. Grote.

His opinion of the historical system of explanation

has been seen in the preceding extracts. Without being more favorable, on the whole, to the allegorical theory, he yet makes a concession to it, with which, if we rightly understand his meaning, we are compelled to disagree. He says,\* "Though allegorical interpretation occasionally lands us in great absurdities, there are certain cases in which it presents intrinsic evidence of being genuine and correct, — i.e., included in the original purport of the story;" and he instances the tale of Ate and the Litæ in the ninth book of the "Iliad," which, he says, no one can doubt, carries with it an intentional moral. Now, it seems to us that this remark allows either too much to allegory, or not enough.

Every reader of the "Iliad," even in translation, must be familiar with this fine passage, in which Ate (by Mr. Grote translated "reckless impulse") is represented as a gigantic figure, who stalks forth furiously, diffusing ruin; and Litæ, or Prayers, daughters of Zeus or Jupiter, as slowly limping after her to heal the wounds she has made. Now, if the poet did not believe the personal existence of Ate and the Litæ; if he employed what he knew to be a mere figure of speech as a means of giving greater impressiveness to a general remark respecting the course of human affairs, — the passage is then rightly termed allegorical. But if, as we conceive, such employment of the language of Polytheism in a merely figurative sense neither existed nor could exist until Polytheism was virtually defunct; if the use of religious forms as a simple artifice of rhetoric would have appeared to

\* Vol. i. p. 570.

Homer (supposing the idea to have presented itself at all) an impious profanation; if the poet, in the full simplicity of his religious faith, accepted literally the personality and divinity of Ate and the Litæ, — there is then no place for the word "allegory," in its correct acception. That a moral meaning accompanied in his mind the religious doctrine, and even suggested it, we at once admit: but he personified and deified the moral agencies concerned; and the story, as Müller says of the legend of Prometheus and Epimetheus (Forethought and Afterthought), is not an allegory, but a myth. Otherwise we must go much further, and affirm a substratum of allegory in the whole Greek religion: for the majority of its deities, including nearly all the more conspicuous of them, are undoubtedly personifications of either the physical or the moral powers of nature; and, this granted, the attributes ascribed to them would necessarily shadow forth those which observation pointed out in the phenomena over which they were supposed to preside.

The natural history of Polytheism is now well understood. Religion, though *ex vi termini* preternatural, is yet a theory for the explanation of nature, and generally runs parallel with the progress of human conceptions of that which it is intended to explain; each step made in the study of the phenomena determining a modification in the theory. The savage, drawing his idea of power from his own voluntary impulses, ascribes will and personality to every individual object in which he beholds a power beyond his control; and at once commences propitiating it by prayer and sacrifice. This original Fetishism, to-

wards natural objects which combine great power with a well-marked individuality, was prolonged far into the period of Polytheism proper. The Gaia of Hesiod, mother of all the gods, was not a goddess of the earth, but the earth itself; and her physical are blended with her divine attributes in a singular medley. The sun and moon, not deities residing therein, were the objects of the ancient Grecian worship: their identification with Apollo and Artemis belongs to a much later age. The Hindoos worship as a goddess the river Nerbudda, — not a deity of the river, but the river itself; \* and if they ascribe to it sex, and other attributes inconsistent with the physical characteristics of the natural object, it is from inability to conceive the idea of personality, except in conjunction with the ordinary human impulses and attributes. The Homeric Scamander is scarcely other than the animated river itself; and the god Alpheus, who pursues Arethusa through the ocean, is the actual river, flowing through the salt waves without mixing with them, and at length combining its waters in indissoluble union with those of the fountain it loves.

But where natural objects are not thus strikingly individualized; where the mind can at once recognize, in a multitude of things, one and the same power of affecting human interests, — its tendency is not to deify the objects, but to place a deity over them, who, himself invisible, rules from a distance a whole class of phenomena. Bread and wine are great and beneficent powers; but the blindest Fetish-worshipper never proba-

\* See, for interesting details, "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official," by Lieut.-Col. Sleeman; vol. i. chap. iii.

ly offered prayer or sacrifice to an individual loaf or wine-flask, but to an invisible Bacchus or Ceres, whose body, being unseen, is naturally assimilated to the human, and who is thenceforth handed over to the poets to exalt and dignify. Thus the first and most obvious step in the generalization of nature, by arranging objects in classes, is accompanied by a corresponding generalization of the gods. Fire, being a more mysterious as well as a more terrible agent, has, in some religions, been an object of direct worship; but in Homer we find the transition completely effected from the worship of fire to that of the fire-god, Hephæstos. Thunder, the most awful of all, was universally received as the attribute of the most powerful of deities, the ruler of gods and men. As thought advanced, not only all physical agencies capable of ready generalization, — as Night, Morning, Sleep, Death, together with the more obvious of the great emotional agencies, Beauty, Love, War, — but by degrees also the ideal products of a higher abstraction, as Wisdom, Justice, and the like, were severally accounted the work and manifestation of as many special divinities. "It became," as Müller\* expresses it, "a general habit to concentrate every form of spiritual existence, whose unity was recognized, into an apex, which necessarily appeared to the mind as a personal entity. Can it be imagined that *Δίκη*, *Θέμυς*, *Μήτηρ*, *Μούσα*, *Χάρις*, *Ἥβη*, *Ἐριννύς*, *Ἔρις*, could have attained a generally believed reality, and even in some measure divine worship, otherwise than through a necessity, grounded on the epoch of mental

\* "Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology" (p. 61,) recently and very well translated by Mr. Leitch.

development, to contemplate in this manner as a unity, not only every aspect of nature, but also of human life? How were it possible to pray to Charis, if she were only viewed as a predicate of human or higher natures? It is even wrong to consider the worship paid by the Romans to Virtus, Felicitas, &c., as allegorical in the strict sense; for then it could be no worship at all."

Assuredly these objects of worship were not conceived as ideas, but as persons; whose fundamental attributes, however, necessarily ran in close analogy to those of the ideas which they embodied. Such is the primitive type of Polytheism, — a thing of no human invention, but, in the strictest sense of the word, natural, and of spontaneous growth. Afterwards, indeed, poets and priests did invent stories concerning the gods, more or less connected or consistent with their original attributes, which stories became incorporated with religion; and the most popular deities were those concerning whom the most impressive stories had been feigned. But the legends did not make the religion: the basis of that was a *bonâ-fide* personification and divinization of the occult causes of phenomena. In these views, we have no reason to think that we at all differ from Mr. Grote: but, if there is any point in which his expositions do not quite satisfy us, it is that they do not bring out strongly enough this part of the case; that the Greek religion appears in them too much as a sort of accident, — the arbitrary creation of poets and story-tellers; its origin in the natural human faculties and the spontaneous tendencies of the uncultivated intellect being indicated indeed, but not placed in a sufficiently strong light.



With this exception, we can hardly bestow too much praise on this portion of Mr. Grote's performance. He has overcome the difficulty, so great to a modern imagination, of entering intelligently into the polytheistic frame of mind, and conception of nature. In no treatise which we could mention, certainly in no work connected with Grecian history, do we find so thorough a comprehension of that state of the human intellect in which the directly religious interpretation of nature is paramount; in which every explanation of phenomena, that refers them to the personal agency of a hidden supernatural power, appears natural and probable, and every other mode of accounting for them incredible; where miracles are alone plausible, and explanation by natural causes is not only offensive to the reverential feelings of the hearer, but actually repugnant to his reason, so contrary is it to the habitual mode of interpreting phenomena, — a state of mind made perfectly intelligible by our knowledge of the Hindoos, and nowhere better exhibited than in the pictures given by near observers of that curious people, who reproduce in so many respects the mental characteristics of the infancy of the human race.\*

Though many topics discussed in Mr. Grote's volumes are more important, there is none more interesting, than the authorship of the Homeric poems, regarded by all antiquity as the production of one great poet (or at most two, for the "Iliad" and "Odyssey"), but

\* It is much to be regretted that so few such pictures are extant. We recommend, as one of the most instructive, the work, already referred to, of Col. Sleeman, — a book which may be called, without exaggeration, "The Hindoos painted by Themselves."

which the scepticism of a recent period has pronounced to be compilations made as late as the time of Pisistratus, from a multitudinous assemblage of popular ballads. Now, however, that the Wolfian hypothesis seems nearly abandoned in the country in which it arose, the notion that such productions could have been manufactured by piecing and dovetailing a number of short poems originally distinct, may be ranked, along with many other conceits of learned ingenuity, in the class of psychological curiosities. We are aware of no argument on the Wolfian side of the controversy which really deserves any weight, except the difficulty of conceiving that such long poems could have been composed and handed down to posterity by memory alone: for that they were produced prior to the use of writing, is certain, from many considerations,\* and especially from the absence of the smallest allusion to such an art in the whole eight and forty books; though so full of notices and descriptions of almost every useful or ornamental process which can be supposed to have been in existence in that early age, that they have been said to be a summary of all the knowledge of the time. The preservation of such works, without help from writing, is no doubt, at the first aspect of the matter, surprising, but only because in this, as in so many other things, we antedate our modern experience, and apply to early ages the limited standard of our own. It is well said by Plato in the "Phædrus," that the invention of letters was the great enfeeblener of memory. In

\* These are fully set forth by Mr. Grote, pp. 191 to 197 of his second volume; and by Müller, "History of the Literature of Ancient Greece," pp. 37 to 39.

our time, when the habit is formed of recording all things in permanent characters, and when every one relies, not on memory, but on the substitutes for it, we can scarcely form an idea of what its intrinsic powers must have been, when exercised and cultivated as a thing to be solely depended upon. Between the remembering faculties of the Homerids of Chios, and those of our degenerate days, there was doubtless as great a difference as between the powers of eye and ear of a North-American Indian and those of a London citizen. Nor was it, after all, more difficult to retain a single poem of twenty-four books, than twenty-four poems of one book each, which is much less than must have formed the stock in trade of any celebrated *ᾠοδοίς*. As for the poet himself, he doubtless, as he proceeded in the composition, wrote his poem, as it were, on the memory of the younger bards, by whom it is consonant to the manners of that age that he should have been surrounded.

Those who assert the essential unity of the Homeric poems by no means deny that there may have been, and probably were, interpolations, and even additions of some length, made, either by the same or by other poets, to the original plan. This is the ground taken by Mr. Grote. He rejects the Pisistratean hypothesis. He maintains, from internal evidence, the complete unity of plan and authorship in the "Odyssey." He claims a like unity for the greater part of the "Iliad," but argues for an amount of subsequent addition to the poem greater than we can bring ourselves to consider probable. We shall give, in his own words, what is peculiar to his theory:—

“The first book, together with the eighth, and the books from the eleventh to the twenty-second inclusive, seem to form the primary organization of the poem, then properly an *Achilleis*; the twenty-third and twenty-fourth books are additions at the tail of this primitive poem, which still leave it nothing more than an enlarged *Achilleis*: but the books from the second to the seventh inclusive, together with the tenth, are of a wider and more comprehensive character, and convert the poem from an *Achilleis* into an *Iliad*. The primitive frontispiece, inscribed with the anger of Achilles and its direct consequences, yet remains, after it has ceased to be co-extensive with the poem. The parts added, however, are not necessarily inferior in merit to the original poem: so far is this from being the case, that amongst them are comprehended some of the noblest efforts of the Grecian epic. Nor are they more recent in date than the original; strictly speaking, they must be a little more recent: but they belong to the same generation, and state of society, as the primitive *Achilleis*.

“Nothing can be more striking than the manner in which Homer concentrates our attention, in the first book, upon Achilles as the hero, his quarrel with Agamemnon, and the calamities of the Greeks, which are held out as about to ensue from it, through the intercession of Thetis with Zeus. But the incidents dwelt upon from the beginning of the second book down to the combat between Hector and Ajax in the seventh, animated and interesting as they are, do nothing to realize this promise: they are a splendid picture of the Trojan war generally, and eminently suitable to that larger title under which the poem has been immortalized; but the consequences of the anger of Achilles do not appear until the eighth book. The tenth book, or *Doloneia*, is also a portion of the *Iliad*, but not of the *Achilleis*; while the ninth book appears to be a subsequent addition (I venture to say, an unworthy addition), nowise harmonizing with that main stream of the *Achilleis*, which flows from the eleventh book to the twenty-

second. The eighth book ought to be read in immediate connection with the eleventh, in order to see the structure of what seems the primitive *Achilleis*; for there are several passages in the eleventh and the following books, which prove that the poet who composed them could not have had present to his mind the main event of the ninth book, — the outpouring of profound humiliation by the Greeks, and from Agamemnon especially, before Achilles, coupled with formal offers to restore *Briseïs*, and pay the amplest compensation for past wrong. The words of Achilles (not less than those of *Patroclus* and *Nestor*) in the eleventh and following books plainly imply that the humiliation of the Greeks before him, for which he thirsts, is as yet future and contingent; that no plenary apology has yet been tendered, nor any offer made of restoring *Briseïs*; while both *Nestor* and *Patroclus*, with all their wish to induce him to take arms, nevertheless view him as one whose ground of quarrel stands still the same as it did at the beginning. Moreover, if we look at the first book, — the opening of the *Achilleis*, — we shall see that this prostration of Agamemnon and the chief Grecian heroes before Achilles would really be the termination of the whole poem; for Achilles asks nothing more from *Thetis*, nor *Thetis* any thing more from *Zeus*, than that Agamemnon and the Greeks may be brought to know the wrong that they have done to their capital warrior, and humbled to the dust in expiation of it. We may add, that the abject terror in which Agamemnon appears in the ninth book, when he sends the supplicatory message to Achilles, as it is not adequately accounted for by the degree of calamity which the Greeks have experienced in the preceding (eighth) book, so it is inconsistent with the gallantry and high spirit with which he strives at the beginning of the eleventh. The situation of the Greeks only becomes desperate when the three great chiefs — Agamemnon, *Odysseus*, and *Diomedes* — are disabled by wounds: this is the irreparable calamity which works upon *Patroclus*, and through

him upon Achilles. The ninth book, as it now stands, seems to me an addition by a different hand to the original *Achilleis*, framed so as both to forestall and spoil the nineteenth book, which is the real reconciliation of the two inimical heroes. I will venture to add, that it carries the ferocious pride and egotism of Achilles beyond all admissible limits, and is shocking to that sentiment of Nemesis which was so deeply seated in the Grecian mind. We forgive any excess and fury against the Trojans and Hector after the death of Patroclus; but that he should remain unmoved by restitution, by abject supplications, and by the richest atoning presents tendered from the Greeks, indicates an implacability more than human, and certainly such as neither the poet of the first book, nor the poet of the last twelve books, seeks to portray." — Vol. ii. 234–44.

We are able to go so far with the distinction drawn by Mr. Grote as to admit that he has discriminated well between those parts of the "*Iliad*" which cannot have been additions to the original plan, and those which possibly may. If the poem does consist of an original basis and a subsequent enlargement, the books which he has pointed out, or some of them, must be the parts superadded; but that they, or even the ninth, to which he takes such vehement exception, really were such subsequent additions (powerful as are some of the considerations he has urged), he has not succeeded in convincing us.

It is true, the books from the second to the seventh inclusive in no way forward the action of the poem, as dependent on the anger of Achilles; and it is remarkable, that, during that interval, Zeus not only suspends the performance of his promise to Thetis in the first book, but seems absolutely to have forgotten it, and

directs his conduct and counsels by totally different considerations. This last is a serious blemish in the construction of the story: but imperfection of workmanship does not prove plurality of workmen; and, if the poet intended to make his poem an *Ilias* as well as an *Achilleis*, there would have been in any case a difficulty of this sort to surmount, which it is not necessary to suppose that he must have surmounted successfully. But, if not strictly belonging to the plan of the *Achilleis*, these books conduce in a remarkable degree to the effect of those parts of the poem which do belong to it. In no epic is the interest centred exclusively in one individual: even in the *Achilleis*, not Achilles only, but the Greeks generally, and even the Trojans, inspire a keen sympathy; and how much that sympathy is promoted by the preliminary books, needs hardly be pointed out. Not only does the success of the Greeks in the fourth and fifth books greatly deepen the sense of their subsequent disaster by giving it the character of a turn of fortune, while the exploits of the principal heroes, especially Diomedes and Ulysses, augment the impression of their difficulties when those heroes are disabled, but, above all, it is in those books that we become acquainted with, and interested in, most of the leading characters of the subsequent epos. Hector especially, on whom the poet evidently intended that a strong personal interest should rest, — what ground should we have had for sympathizing with him, were it not for the beautiful scenes with Paris and Helen in the fourth book, Andromache and Hecuba in the sixth, and Ajax in the seventh? Without the books which Mr. Grote strikes from the original plan, there would be, if we

except the amiable characters of Patroclus and Sarpedon, scarcely any thing in the poem which excites a really personal interest.

With regard to the ninth book, we allow there are difficulties. The principal is the speech of Achilles to Patroclus in the eleventh book; \* which certainly seems to imply that no atonement had yet been offered, or supplication made. Mr. Grote quotes several other passages, which apparently carry a similar implication, but none which, we think, it would be difficult to get over, if this were disposed of. On the other hand, there are difficulties in his own theory. He gets rid of three subsequent allusions to the transactions of the ninth book, by pronouncing them to be interpolations; but he has overlooked one of greater importance in the sixteenth, where Achilles says to Patroclus, that the time has come at which he had said that his revenge would cease, since the enemy has now reached the ships. † He had said this nowhere, as the text now stands, except in his answer to the embassy. If it be suggested that this passage may also be an interpolation, we shall still urge that it is not consonant to the character of Achilles to suppose that he would have so far renounced his anger as to send aid to the Greeks, even in that

\* Δῖε Μενoitιάδῃ, τῷ 'μῶ κεχαρισμενε θυμῷ  
 Νῦν οὖω περὶ γοννατ' ἐμὴ στησέσθαι 'Αχαιοὺς  
 Δισσομένους· χρεῖω γὰρ ἰλανεται οὐκετ' ἀνεκτός.

*Iliad*, xi. 607.

† 'Αλλὰ τὰ μὲν προτετύχθαι ἔασομεν ἄρα περ ἦν  
 'Ασπερχές κεχολῶσθαι ἐνὶ φρεσίν ἦτοι ἔφην γε  
 Οὐ πρὶν μνηϊθῶν καταπασέμεν, ἀλλ' ὅπoταν θῆ  
 Νῆας ἔμας ἀφίκηται αὐτῇ τε, πτολεμὸς τε.

*Iliad*, xvi. 60-64.



extremity, if he had received no offer whatever of atonement or restitution, — if Agamemnon and the Greeks had not yet acknowledged their fault, and humbled themselves before him. With respect to the argument from the more than human ferocity manifested by Achilles, and its conflict with the Greek sentiment of Nemesis, we cannot see the matter in the same light. It is with great hesitation that we should question any opinion of Mr. Grote on a point of Greek erudition; but we know not what evidence he has that the peculiar Greek idea of Nemesis — manifested in the famous speech of Solon to Cræsus, and which afterwards acted so leading a part in the Athenian drama — had already begun to exist in the Homeric age. We rather believe it to have been one of the points of difference between the more solemn and gloomy theology of the historic age of Greece and the lively anthropomorphism of the Homeric Pantheon. We find no traces of it in Homer or Hesiod. We find, indeed, severe vengeance taken on mortals by the Homeric deities, not for pride or arrogance generally, but for some special affront to their own dignity, and particularly for any presumptuous attempt to dispute their pre-eminence. It is on such provocation that Thamyris is struck blind by the Muses, and the children of Niobe destroyed by the arrows of Apollo and Artemis. But no such offence is offered by Achilles in the ninth book, nor any disobedience to the divine powers. No god or goddess had commanded him to lay aside his wrath, as Pallas, in the first book, restrains him from drawing his sword; and Zeus, in the twenty-fourth, enjoins him, through Thetis, to restore the body of Hector. To these inti-

mations he is at once obedient, and is represented throughout as an eminently pious hero. Nor are we at all inclined to admit that his implacability exceeds what the sentiment of that age would allow of in a character of vehement passion. He is not intended for a faultless hero; nor does he show any ferocity in the ninth book at all comparable to that which he displays in the sixteenth, where, in the very act of sending forth Patroclus to aid the Greeks, he utters a fervent wish, that not one Greek or Trojan might be left alive, but they two might alone survive to conquer Troy. Nor can we forget that several of the nobler characteristics of Achilles are nowhere so effectually manifested as in the ninth book; the princely courtesy, rivalling the best conceptions of chivalrous romance, in his reception of the embassy; and that abhorrence of disguise, also more resembling the knightly than the Hellenic model, but so necessary to the ideal of his character, which he emphatically announces in the lines so often quoted:—

*Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος, ὁμῶς ἄϊδα πύλησιν,*

*\*Ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.*

With regard to the tenth book, we think there is weight in what the critics have urged, that the successful nocturnal enterprise of Diomed and Ulysses is skilfully interposed, not only to break the rapid succession of one battle upon another, but to re-animate the spirits and courage of the Greeks after the disasters of the eighth book. We cannot coincide in Mr. Grote's unwillingness to believe "that the author of the fifth book (or Aristeia of Diomedes) would condescend to employ the hero whom he there so brightly glorifies—

the victor even over Ares himself — in slaughtering newly arrived Thracian sleepers, without any large purpose or necessity;” since to kill men who were defenceless, provided they were enemies, and not *ikérai* or suppliants, had little that was repugnant to Greek feeling, even in a more advanced age; while an ambush is invariably spoken of in the “Iliad” as the most dangerous service, and the most decisive test of courage, to which a warrior could be exposed. An Homeric audience would see, in this unchivalrous massacre, only the real intrepidity of the two heroes, in venturing alone, and for so perilous a purpose, into the camp of their sleeping enemies; and, in the Homeric point of view, it was doubtless an exploit worthy of the most distinguished warriors.

That Mr. Grote should think it possible for the two concluding books to be additions, we confess surprises us. We cannot imagine how, with the ideas of the Greeks, both in the Homeric age and subsequently, respecting the rites of sepulture, the action of a Greek epos could ever have been complete until the two heroes, whose successive deaths formed the catastrophe of the poem, had received the accustomed funeral honors. Nor would a Greek audience, we think, have tolerated that Hector, the beloved of Zeus, whose death he so unwillingly concedes to Destiny and the public opinion of Olympus, should have been abandoned by him, when dead, to the ignominious fate designed, and in part executed, by Achilles. We need not point out how much the character of Achilles himself would lose of its interest, without the exquisite manner in which its softer elements are called forth by the interview with

Priam; and though it may be true that "the Homeric man would enter fully into the thirst of revenge felt by Achilles," excessive and brutal as that revenge was, it is assuming too much to suppose that the Homeric man would have sympathized with Achilles exclusively. Such, certainly, was not Homer's purpose, as there are evidences enough even in the *Achilleis* to prove.

The chapter on the "State of Society and Manners as exhibited in Grecian Legend" is sound and judicious; but, on this subject, previous writers had not left so much to be performed. A point of originality, in Mr. Grote's treatment of it, is the comparison kept up between the characteristics of the heroic and those of the historical period. Thus, for example, the sense of obligation in the Homeric period is exclusively of a personal kind. "Personal feelings, either towards the gods, the king, or some near and known individual, fill the whole of a man's bosom: out of them arise all the motives to beneficence, and all the internal restraints upon violence, antipathy, and rapacity; and special communion, as well as special solemnities, are essential to their existence;" while, in the conceptions of the citizen of historical Athens, "the great impersonal authority called The Laws stood out separately, both as guide and sanction, distinct from religious duty or private sympathies." In the Council of Chiefs, and the Agora or Popular Assembly, which, though with no definite function or authority, habitually accompany the Homeric kings, Mr. Grote sees the pre-existing elements of the subsequent republican governments. The following is an important remark:—

“There is yet another point of view in which it behooves us to take notice of the Council and the Agora as integral portions of the legendary government of the Grecian communities. We are thus enabled to trace the employment of public speaking as the standing engine of government, and the proximate cause of obedience, to the social infancy of the nation. The power of speech, in the direction of public affairs, becomes more and more obvious, developed, and irresistible, as we advance towards the culminating period of Grecian history, — the century preceding the battle of Chæroneia. That its development was greatest among the most enlightened sections of the Grecian name, and smallest among the more obtuse and stationary, is matter of notorious fact; and it is not less true, that the prevalence of this habit was one of the chief causes of the intellectual eminence of the nation generally. At a time when all the countries around were plunged comparatively in mental torpor, there was no motive sufficiently present and powerful to multiply so wonderfully the productive minds of Greece, except such as arose from the rewards of public speaking. The susceptibility of the multitude to this sort of guidance, their habit of requiring and enjoying the stimulus which it supplied, and the open discussion, combining regular forms with free opposition, of practical matters, political as well as judicial, are the creative causes which formed such conspicuous adepts in the art of persuasion. Nor was it only professed orators who were thus produced. Didactic aptitude was formed in the background, and the speculative tendencies were supplied with interesting phenomena for observation and combination, at a time when the truths of physical science were almost inaccessible. If the primary effect was to quicken the powers of expression, the secondary but not less certain result was to develop the habits of scientific thought. Not only the oratory of Demosthenes and Pericles, and the colloquial magic of Socrates, but also the philosophical speculations of Plato, and the systematic

politics, rhetoric, and logic of Aristotle, are traceable to the same general tendencies in the minds of the Grecian people; and we find the germ of these expansive forces in the Senate and Agora of their legendary government." — Vol. ii. pp. 105-6.

Incidental remarks of this nature, on the influence of circumstances in forming the peculiar Grecian character and civilization, occur largely in the first two chapters on historical Greece; viz., on its geography, and on "the Hellenic people generally in the early historical times." Mr. Grote does not give these speculations for more than they are worth. He does not affect to exhaust the subject, nor pretends that the causes he assigns account for the whole of the effect, but points out the natural tendencies of each influential fact as it successively passes under his review. The following (vol. ii. pp. 298-302) is a favorable specimen:—

"The configuration of the Grecian territory, so like in many respects to that of Switzerland, produced two effects of great moment upon the character and history of the people. In the first place, it materially strengthened their powers of defence; it shut up the country against those invasions from the interior, which successively subjugated all their continental colonies; and it at the same time rendered each fraction more difficult to be attacked by the rest, so as to exercise a certain conservative influence in assuring the tenure of actual possessors. But in the next place, while it tended to protect each section of Greeks from being conquered, it also kept them politically disunited, and perpetuated their separate autonomy. It fostered that powerful principle of repulsion, which disposed even the smallest township to constitute itself a political unit apart from the rest, and to resist all idea of coalescence with

others, either amicable or compulsory. To a modern reader, accustomed to large political aggregations, and securities for good government through the representative system, it requires a certain mental effort to transport himself back to a time when even the smallest town clung so tenaciously to its right of self-legislation. Nevertheless, such was the general habit and feeling of the ancient world, throughout Italy, Sicily, Spain, and Gaul: among the Hellenes it stands out more conspicuously, for several reasons, — first, because they seem to have pushed the multiplication of autonomous units to an extreme point, seeing that even islands not larger than Peparethos and Amorgos had two or three separate city communities; secondly, because they produced, for the first time in the history of mankind, acute systematic thinkers on matters of government, amongst all of whom the idea of the autonomous city was accepted as the indispensable basis of political speculation; thirdly, because this incurable subdivision proved finally the cause of their ruin, in spite of pronounced intellectual superiority over their conquerors; and, lastly, because incapacity of political coalescence did not preclude a powerful and extensive sympathy between the inhabitants of all the separate cities, with a constant tendency to fraternize for numerous purposes, social, religious, recreative, intellectual, and æsthetical. . . .

“Nor is it rash to suppose that the same [geographical] causes may have tended to promote that unborrowed intellectual development for which they stand so conspicuous. General propositions respecting the working of climate and physical agencies upon character are indeed treacherous; for our knowledge of the globe is now sufficient to teach us, that heat and cold, mountain and plain, sea and land, moist and dry atmosphere, are all consistent with the greatest diversities of resident men. . . . Nevertheless, we may venture to note certain improving influences, connected with their geographical position, at a time when they had no books to study, and no

more advanced predecessors to imitate. We may remark, first, that their position made them at once mountaineers and mariners, thus supplying them with great variety of objects, sensations, and adventures; next, that each petty community, nestled apart amidst its own rocks, was sufficiently severed from the rest to possess an individual life and attributes of its own, yet not so far as to subtract it from the sympathies of the remainder: so that an observant Greek, commencing with a great diversity of half-countrymen, whose language he understood, and whose idiosyncrasies he could appreciate, had access to a larger mass of social and political experience than any other man in so unadvanced an age could personally obtain. The Phœnician, superior to the Greek on ship-board, traversed wider distances, and saw a greater number of strangers; but he had not the same means of intimate communion with a multiplicity of fellows in blood and language: his relations, confined to purchase and sale, did not comprise that mutuality of action and re-action which pervaded the crowd at a Grecian festival. The scene which here presented itself was a mixture of uniformity and variety highly stimulating to the observant faculties of a man of genius, who at the same time, if he sought to communicate his own impressions, or to act upon this mingled and diverse audience, was forced to shake off what was peculiar to his own town or community, and to put forth matter in harmony with the feelings of all."

In the six concluding chapters of the second volume, Mr. Grote comprises the sum of what is known respecting the early condition of those Grecian States which have properly no history prior to the Persian invasion, and brings down the history of the Peloponnesian Greeks to the age of Cræsus and Pisistratus. The fragmentary nature of the information, and the conscientious integrity of the author, who scruples to supply the defi-



ciency of certified facts by theory and conjecture, render these chapters, with one exception, somewhat meagre. The exception is the chapter which treats of the legislation of Lycurgus, the earliest Grecian event of first-rate historical importance.

Although of the personality of Lycurgus scarcely any thing can be said to be known, Mr. Grote entertains no doubt that such a person existed, and that the peculiar Spartan institutions were the work of a single legislator. Indeed, extraordinary as it may seem that one man, or even a combination of men, should have had power not merely to introduce, for that is little, but to give enduring vitality to so singular a system of manners and institutions, the system itself is so intensely artificial, that any more commonplace origin would be still more improbable: it bespeaks in every part systematic design.

The received view, however, of the Lycurgean reforms, and even of the Spartan institutions, Mr. Grote shows to be, in one important point, erroneous, — the supposed equal division of landed property. He rejects this, not on the score of improbability, — for it is not in itself so hard to believe as what Lycurgus really effected, — but because no mention of it is to be found in any Greek author who lived while the Lycurgean institutions were still in force; and there is ample proof that neither Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, nor Aristotle knew of any such equal division, either as connected with Lycurgus or with Sparta. It rests on the sole testimony of Plutarch; and Mr. Grote believes it to have been an historic fancy, generated long after by the regrets and aspirations of the patriotic

party of which the reforming kings, Agis and Cleomenes, were at the head.

“Taking the condition of the city as it stood in the time of Agis III. (say about 250 B.C.), we know that its citizens had become few in number, the bulk of them miserably poor, and all the land in a small number of hands; the old discipline and the public mess (as far as the rich were concerned) degenerated into mere forms; a numerous body of strangers or non-citizens (the old *xenêlasy*, or prohibition of resident strangers, being long discontinued) domiciled in the town, and forming a powerful moneyed interest; and, lastly, the dignity and ascendancy of the State amongst its neighbors altogether ruined. It was insupportable to a young enthusiast like King Agis, and to many ardent spirits among his contemporaries, to contrast this degradation with the previous glories of the country; and they saw no other way of reconstructing the old Sparta, except by again admitting the disfranchised poor citizens, redividing the lands, cancelling all debts, and restoring the public mess and military training in all their strictness. Agis endeavored to carry through these subversive measures (such as no demagogue in the extreme democracy of Athens would ever have ventured to glance at) with the consent of the senate and public assembly and the acquiescence of the rich. His sincerity is attested by the fact, that his own property, and that of his female relatives, among the largest in the State, was cast as the first sacrifice into the common stock. But he became the dupe of unprincipled coadjutors, and perished in the unavailing attempt to realize his scheme by persuasion. His successor, Kleomenês, afterwards accomplished by violence a change substantially similar, though the intervention of foreign arms speedily overthrew both himself and his institutions.

“Now, it was under the state of public opinion which gave birth to these projects of Agis and Kleomenês at Sparta, that

the historic fancy, unknown to Aristotle and his predecessors, first gained ground, of the absolute equality of property as a primitive institution of Lycurgus. How much such a belief would favor the schemes of innovation, is too obvious to require notice; and, without supposing any deliberate imposture, we cannot be astonished that the predispositions of enthusiastic patriots interpreted according to their own partialities an old unrecorded legislation from which they were separated by more than five centuries. The Lycurgean discipline tended forcibly to suggest to men's minds the *idea* of equality among the citizens, — that is, the negation of inequality not founded on some personal attribute, — inasmuch as it assimilated the habits, enjoyments, and capacities of the rich to those of the poor; and the equality thus existing in idea and tendency, which seemed to proclaim the wish of the founder, was strained by the later reformers into a positive institution which he had at first realized, but from which his degenerate followers had receded. . . . We shall readily believe that [this hypothesis] would find easy and sincere credence, when we recollect how many similar delusions have obtained vogue in modern times far more favorable to historical accuracy; how much false coloring has been attached by the political feeling of recent days to matters of ancient history, — such as the Saxon Witenagemote, the Great Charter, the rise and growth of the English House of Commons, or even the Poor Law of Elizabeth." — Vol. ii. pp. 527–30.

The peculiarity of Sparta was not equality of fortunes, but a consistent attempt to make rich and poor live exactly alike; and live not for themselves, but as the creatures and instruments of the ideal being called the State. The expedient used by the legislator to effect this, was to destroy, not private property itself, but the possibility of any separate enjoyment of it. By a stated contribution in kind from every citizen, public

tables were maintained, at which all Spartans, from childhood to death, took regularly the same frugal meal. The Spartan citizen —

“Lived habitually in public, always either himself under drill, gymnastic and military, or a critic and spectator of others, — always under the fetters and observances of a rule, partly military, partly monastic; estranged from the independence of a separate home; seeing his wife, during the first years after marriage, only by stealth; and maintaining little peculiar relation with his children. The surveillance not only of his fellow-citizens, but also of authorized censors or captains, nominated by the State, was perpetually acting upon him: his day was passed in public exercises and meals, his night in the public barrack to which he belonged. . . .

“The parallel of the Lycurgean institutions is to be found in the Republic of Plato, who approves the Spartan principle of select guardians, carefully trained, and administering the community at discretion: with this momentous difference, indeed, — that the Spartan character formed by Lycurgus is of a low type, rendered savage and fierce by exclusive and overdone bodily discipline, destitute even of the elements of letters, immersed in their own narrow specialties, and taught to despise all that lay beyond; possessing all the qualities requisite to procure dominion, but none of those calculated to render dominion popular or salutary to the subject; while the habits and attributes of the guardians, as shadowed forth by Plato, are enlarged as well as philanthropic, qualifying them not simply to govern, but to govern for purposes protective, conciliatory, and exalted. Both Plato and Aristotle conceived as the perfection of society something of the Spartan type, — a select body of equally privileged citizens, disengaged from industrious pursuits, and subjected to public and uniform training; both admit (with Lycurgus) that the citizen belongs neither to himself nor to his family, but to his city; both at

the same time note with regret, that the Spartan training was turned only to one portion of human virtue, — that which is called forth in a state of war; the citizens were converted into a sort of garrison, always under drill, and always ready to be called forth either against Helots at home, or against enemies abroad. . . . When we contemplate the general insecurity of Grecian life in the ninth or eighth century before the Christian era, and especially the precarious condition of a small band of Dorian conquerors in Sparta and its district, with subdued Helots on their own lands, and Achæans unsubdued all around them, . . . the exclusive aim which Lycurgus proposed to himself is easily understood; but what is truly surprising is the violence of his means, and the success of the result. He realized his project of creating, in the eight or nine thousand Spartan citizens, unrivalled habits of obedience, hardihood, self-denial, and military aptitude; complete subjection on the part of each individual to the local public opinion, and preference of death to the abandonment of Spartan maxims; intense ambition on the part of every one to distinguish himself within the prescribed sphere of duties, with little ambition for any thing else. In what manner so rigorous a system of individual training can have been first brought to bear upon any community, mastering the course of the thoughts and actions from boyhood to old age, — a work far more difficult than any political revolution, — we are not permitted to discover; nor does even the influence of an earnest and energetic Herakleid man, seconded by the still more powerful working of the Delphian god behind, upon the strong pious susceptibilities of the Spartan mind, sufficiently explain a phenomenon so remarkable in the history of mankind, unless we suppose them aided by some combination of co-operating circumstances which history has not transmitted to us, and preceded by disorders so exaggerated as to render the citizens glad to escape from them at any price.” — Vol. ii. pp. 504–519.

There is indeed no such instance of the wonderful pliability, and amenability to artificial discipline, of the human mind, as is afforded by the complete success of the Lacedæmonian legislator, for many generations, in making the whole body of Spartan citizens *at Sparta* exactly what he had intended to make them. At Sparta, it must be said; for a Spartan out of Sparta, at least during his country's ascendancy, was not only the most domineering and arrogant, but in spite of, or rather by a natural re-action from, his ascetic training, the most rapacious and corrupt of all Greeks: no one fell so easy a victim to the temptations of luxury and splendor. Yet such habitual abnegation of ordinary personal interests, and merging of self in an idea, were not compatible with pettiness of mind. Most of the anecdotes and recorded sayings of individual Lacedæmonians breathe a certain magnanimity of spirit; although the Lacedæmonian State, which was the object of this worship, and was accustomed not to give but to receive sacrifices, was memorable for the peculiar pettiness of its political conduct, — a selfishness so excessive, as, by the blindness and even the un-Spartan cowardice which it engendered, perpetually to frustrate its own ends.

Such were the Spartans, — those hereditary Tories and Conservatives of Greece, — objects of exaggerated admiration to the moralists and philosophers of the far nobler as well as greater and wiser Athens; because the second-rate superior minds of a cultivated age and nation are usually in exaggerated opposition against its spirit, and lean towards the faults contrary to those against which they are daily contending. To men who

felt called upon to stand up for Law against Will, and for traditional wisdom against the subtleties of sophists and the arts of rhetoricians, Sparta was the standing model of reverence for law, and attachment to ancient maxims. The revolutions which incessantly menaced every other Grecian State, and from which even Athens was not wholly secure, never threatened Sparta. The steadiness of the Spartan polity, and the constancy of Spartan maxims, were to the Greeks highly imposing phenomena. "It was the only government in Greece which could trace an unbroken peaceable descent from a high antiquity, and from its real or supposed founder;" and this, we think with Mr. Grote, was one of the main causes "of the astonishing ascendancy which the Spartans acquired over the Hellenic mind, and which they will not be found at all to deserve by any superior ability in the conduct of affairs. The steadiness of their political sympathies — exhibited at one time by putting down the tyrants or despots, at another by overthrowing the democracies — stood in the place of ability; and even the recognized failings of their government were often covered by the sentiment of respect for its early commencement and uninterrupted continuance." — Vol. ii. p. 477.

The reader who is conversant with the existing state of knowledge respecting the Grecian world, will gather, from what has been laid before him, that, as a contribution to that knowledge, the present work is of high performance, and still higher promise. The author is not surpassed, even by German scholarship, in intimate and accurate acquaintance with the whole field of Greek

literature and antiquity; while none of his predecessors have approached to him in the amount of philosophy and general mental accomplishment which he has brought to bear upon the subject.

It has been made an objection to the volumes now published, that they contain a greater amount of dissertation than of history. To such objectors it may be replied, that, for the times here treated of, a continuous stream of narrative is not possible; that those who desire nothing from history but an amusing story may find such abundantly provided elsewhere; that it is as much an historian's duty to judge as to narrate, to prove as to assert; and that the same critics would be the first to reproach a writer who should substitute for the commonly received view of the facts a view of his own, without showing by what evidence he was prepared to substantiate it. There is in this case, too, the further peculiarity, that what is brought forward as matter of evidence is itself almost always part and parcel of the exposition of the Greek mind; and, on this score alone, no one who wishes to understand what Greece was would desire to see one page of Mr. Grote's argumentative chapters expunged.

In the present volumes, the style is clear, unaffected, and often very apt and vigorous. If we have a complaint to make, it would be of the too-frequent employment of words of Greek or Latin origin; some of them recognized English words, though not in common use, but others purely of his own invention, and unintelligible except to scholars. In some cases, doubtless, the words are needed, and carry their explanation along with them: such a word as "autonomous," conveying a



political idea not exactly expressed by any modern word or phrase, is its own sufficient justification; and the same may be said of "gens," a word borrowed from Roman history to express a combination of religious and political ideas familiar to antiquity, and the same, substantially, which Niebuhr has proved that the term denoted at Rome. But many cases would be found, in a careful revisal of these volumes, in which similar hard words are used to convey a meaning which might be perfectly expressed by phrases generally intelligible.

END OF VOL. II.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace for the year 1875. The names are given in alphabetical order of their surnames.

1. J. A. Smith  
2. W. B. Jones  
3. T. C. Brown  
4. R. D. White  
5. M. G. Green  
6. H. K. Black  
7. L. P. Grey  
8. N. Q. Blue  
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